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‘We don’t know if we have a right to live’
The Impact of Global Protection Norms in
the Micro Spaces of Armed Conflict.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD/MPhil

2016

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Abstract

Using South Sudan and the Central African Republic as examples of some of the worst protection contexts in the world, this research asks if global protection norms make a difference for people who are at grave risk and most need them to deliver on their promise. Positioned within the tension between so-called 'advancing norms' and 'worsening realities', it argues that globally articulated protection norms should be judged according to the concrete impact they generate in the lives of the most vulnerable. Drawing from the empirical data of some 970 interviews with some 2390 individuals, it juxtaposes insights into the micro level lived experiences of violence and protection, with macro level assumptions of how protection works. Taking IR constructivism's norm diffusion theory as an articulation of this macro view, it unpacks the assumptions underpinning this model and contrasts these with the micro level accounts of how reality unfolds. With the global vision of protection assuming a top-down deliver of protection, it traces the likely global to local trajectories through which 'advancing norms' are presumed to be translated into a concrete impact in local spaces. A meso level lens spotlights the utter disconnects and/or the dramatic distortions that occur at the interface between these two perspectives. This lens reveals that 'advancing norms' and their global promise to protect largely fail to penetrate into the micro spaces of these 'worsening realities'. People at grave risk in these 'worsening realities' are left to manage their own protection needs while literally staring down the barrel of the gun of the perpetrator. This generates a distinctly different politics of protection than the constructivists presume.

Acronyms

AU	– African Union
CAR	– Central African Republic
CdQ	– Chef de Quartier
CPA	– Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DFID	– Department for International Development (UK Government)
DRC	– Danish Refugee Council
DRC	– Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	– European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office
FACA	– Forces Armées Central Africain (National military forces of CAR)
FIDH	– International Federation for Human Rights
FOMAC	– Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (Multinational Force of Central Africa)
GBV	– Gender Based Violence
GoSS	– Government of South Sudan
GoCAR	– Government of Central African Republic
HRW	– Human Rights Watch
HSBA	– Human Security Baseline Assessment
ICC	– International Criminal Court
ICG	– International Crisis Group
ICHRP	– International Council on Human Rights Policy
ICISS	– International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICRC	– International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTY	– International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDP	– Internally Displaced Persons
IFRC	– International Federation of the Red Cross
ICHRP	– International Council on Human Rights Policy
INGO	– International Non-Governmental Organization
LRA	– Lord's Resistance Army
MISCA	– Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite africaine (African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic)
MINUSCA	– Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en Centrafrique (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic)
MSF	– Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
OCHA	– Office for the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	– Overseas Development Institute
OHCHR	– Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PoC	– Protection of Civilians
R2P	– Responsibility to Protect
SPLA	– Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	– Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRSG	– Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSLS	– South Sudan Law Society
UDHR	– Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	– United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNMISS	– United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSC	– United Nations Security Council
UNSG	– United Nations Secretary General

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Preface

I would describe myself as an idealist in the sense that I would like to live in a world in which senseless human suffering was kept to a minimum. From that perspective, I am as enthusiastic as anyone can be about the normative evolution that has occurred during recent decades. We are ever more precisely articulating a global vision of a gentler world. The challenge is in operationalising this vision. As a person who had worked for some 15 years in the humanitarian sector prior to undertaking this research project, I was committed to playing my small role in making that happen. However, I quickly learned that it is not so obvious how this vision will be realised, especially in those places in the world where this vision was most desperately needed.

Working primarily in conflict zones in central and eastern Africa, I was astounded to see just how far reality could fall from this lofty vision of a gentler world. For example, for people who had been living in a rebel held area in Congo-Brazzaville, so-called 'health care' consisted of a desperate mother spending extremely scarce cash on a concoction of red, black, yellow, white and pink pills chosen from the random selection available in the rusty wheel-barrels of the few vendors who periodically wandered through town. A woman who I found shuffling through the selection explained that once purchased, these pills were typically ground up, diluted in water and then given to the ill child as treatment. Having no way of knowing what it was that she was purchasing, the best case scenario is that these drugs, typically expired and counterfeit, had been baking in the hot African sun long enough to destroy any dangerous active ingredients.

While such a scenario is difficult enough to reconcile with the notion of Universal Human Rights, self-managed protection paints an ever more dire picture. For example, while working in Darfur during the early days of that crisis, I encountered a group of people huddled under a tree, clearly panicked and on the run. They explained that men on horses had suddenly arrived into their village and began shooting randomly at the people and setting fire to their homes. This group had managed to grab their children and frantically flee their village. With extreme agitation, an elder man recounted an unimaginable kind of terror when he realised the attackers had lit the extremely flammable dense tall dry grass, through which they were running, on fire. He explained that some of the small children and the elderly were simply not fast enough to outrun these flames. Although this threat paled in relation to the widespread reports of destruction, mutilation, rapes and killings that emerged during that crisis, the image he painted of his little grand-daughter – never mind

himself – being chased down by fire as they fled from their homes in panic left an indelible mark on my imagination. This is not a kind of gentle world.

All too many similarly tragic experiences were recounted by the many people in Central African Republic and South Sudan who graciously agreed to participate in this research project. For people who are caught up in acutely violent conflict zones, unimaginable hell can often become their daily reality. And in their efforts to survive, dramatic horrors are quickly normalised. For example, while being relentlessly pursued by armed perpetrators, the fact that you must pile your smallest children into a water basin and pull them along as you flee into the swamp with another child clinging to your back and another struggling along-side you is simply dealt with. In raw exposure to ruthless inhumanity, people at risk simply do what they can; what they must to survive. It is 'normal' in that everyone is doing it. Many were also unsuccessful in the face of powerfully untenable odds.

While there is little time and indeed little value in people caught up within them reflecting on the utter cruelty of these circumstances, the simple fact of such exposure sits in stark contrast to claims of Universal Human Rights and the global assumption of protection. Glimpses into the micro level realities of the lived experiences of armed conflict begin to illustrate a dramatic incongruence with any notion of a gentler world.

The global vision implies a growing will to step in and protect those who suffer the worst manifestations of inhumanity as the basics of a gentler world. However, virtually every individual I spoke with from within the micro spaces of either CAR or South Sudan recounted what were often dramatic and harrowing experiences in which they were exposed to violence and the global promise of protection had failed to materialise.

In both cases, such incidents are not one-off, but have rather been perpetual. Being characterised by civilian-targeted violence, the dire circumstances of both contexts studied have continued to morph into ever fresher expressions of hell in the lives of individuals caught up in them.

Reconciling the graphic human suffering that is all too visible from the micro level, with the ever-more precisely articulated global vision becomes very difficult. This macro vision has little relationship with the micro realities. They are distinctly separate worlds. The painful reality is that these respondents are living the experiences of non-existent human rights.

However, these people themselves also grappled with global claims of universal rights. Based on their lived realities, they were for the most part quick to conclude the obvious – that such rights simply don't apply to them. Reflecting a widely held assumption

that rights are somehow given and withheld by some unknown superior power, those reflecting further on the idea of rights wondered if they themselves were somehow bad people and were thus undeserving of rights. They imagined that their rights were being withheld as a punishment. As such, while adding up to little more than a false promise in these micro spaces, the notion of rights actually manages to generate yet another dimension to the pain and suffering.

From my observer perspective, I found people's raw exposure to threat – and the fact that I was powerless to affect this – very difficult to manage. In one case I struck up a dialogue with a Community Leader in Bangui who was under intensive threat. Having been identified as a dissident by the new Séléka authorities, he was at serious risk of being 'disappeared' at any moment. As such, I visited him regularly in the hopes of indicating to the Séléka that a foreign eye was monitoring his circumstances. Although he repeatedly voiced appreciation for this support, I was all too aware of, indeed shamed by, the minute contribution that I could make towards his well-being. People facing deadly threats in such contexts are truly on their own. In reality, my presence may well have actually exacerbated his circumstances. And frankly, today (more than two years of acute crisis later), I would fear to return to look for him, as it is quite possible that I would not find him alive.

In South Sudan even people under the armed protection of UN peacekeepers doubted the reliability of the promise of protection. At the beginning of that particular crisis, people had forced their way onto UN compounds. While these apparent 'safe-zones' had certainly saved some lives, in other cases the feeble perimeters of these sites were breached by armed assailants. This eroded the confidence of people at risk, leading many to request to be transported out of these 'danger zones' back to their places of origin. While acknowledging that in their typically deeply rural home areas, there would be absolutely no means of formal protection, they expressed a greater confidence in their own capacity to keep themselves and their families safe.

More fatalistically, some simply explained that although they are unlikely to be able to keep themselves safe, at least they would be united with their families. Stripping their so-called auto-protection capacity to the bones, these people stressed that if they were going to die, they at least wanted to die together with their own people. How can these brutal micro level realities be reconciled with the globally articulated universal promise of protection?

The fact is that they can't be. But this does not disturb the global vision, which constructed on the dispassionate macro perspective, purposefully generates a sanitised

view of these contexts. Devastating individual experiences that dominate the micro level realities exist at best as generic statistics in the macro space.

Given the utter incongruence between these two perspectives, the space that sits between them becomes particularly fascinating. It is in the so-called meso space that the contradictions are exposed. It is in this space that dramatic distortions are made visible. For example, despite being aware of the horrible crises that individuals are living through, and the extent that their rights could not possibly be respected, meso space distortions enable the continuation of a global vision which claims universal and inviolable rights that belong to every individual simply due to the fact that they are human beings. It is also in this space that people living these experiences make sense of these contradictions. In both cases mental gymnastics required to reconcile what is a disjointed interface between the two perspectives. As such, while this thesis contrasts macro and micro perspectives on protection, much of the analytic reflection is actually located within the meso-space that bridges these two extremes.

CHAPTER 1 : Introduction

'Social commitment to the idea of human rights has both widened and deepened to the point where it is now one of the most influential moral and political concepts of our time' (Orend 2002, p.26).

'It is the idea of human rights in all of its conceptual lucidity, simplicity, and universalism that has emerged as a normative ordering principle' (Goodale 2006, p.26).

'One of the most essential conceptual innovations in the area of civilian protection has been the establishment and popularization of the responsibility to protect' (Global Solutions 2011, p.2).

'The world has embraced the responsibility to protect, not because it is easy, but because it is right' (Ban Ki-moon 2012).

1.1 Introduction

Recent decades have seen an unparalleled advancement of globally articulated protection norms. As illustrated above, the significance of these normative standards is widely lauded. Being described as some of the 'most essential conceptual innovations' ever, these normative ideals are said to 'now permeate the fabric of international society' (Smith 2005, p.5). With Hafner-Burton stating that they 'articulate a powerful vision for the promotion of human well-being everywhere' (2013, p.xvi), the global commitment to the idea of protection appears to be stronger than ever. But do these normative advances really make a difference? Does this globally articulated ideational vision of protection actually translate into a concrete impact in the lives of individuals who are in most need of protection?

Contrasting sharply with the enthusiasm over this normative evolution is the fact that vast numbers of very real human beings are regularly confronting shocking 'human wrongs' in armed conflict and other such situations of prolonged violence. The experiences of individuals caught up in the crises that plague Syria, Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), the Republic of South Sudan, and far too many others, pose an ugly contrast to the enthusiastic claims of a powerful vision of protection. When these ever advancing ideational norms are juxtaposed with the harsh realities of some of the worst protection quagmires in the world, a profound disconnect is exposed.

This research is positioned at the point of disconnect between the pervasive rhetoric that surrounds these 'advancing norms' and the micro level lived experiences of these 'worsening realities'. Having worked for nearly two decades in conflict zones on protection issues, I take these 'advancing norms' as a positive indication of potential and

would desperately hope that they could generate a real difference for people who most need the promise they embody to be real. At the same time, it is more than evident that delivering on this promise is no simple feat. As such, this work seeks to spotlight the challenges in translating grand ideals into concrete action. While ‘advancing norms’ as an expression of aspirational ideals are not to be dismissed, this work takes the position that the metric against which such norms should be measured is that of a tangible protective impact made in the lives of the very real people who are facing some of the most grave risks in these ‘worsening realities’ – which from here on in, are referred to as “fragile protection zones” (FPZs).

If ‘advancing norms’ are to make a concrete difference, clear contiguous global-to-local trajectories through which they are translated are essential. It is these trajectories that this work seeks to trace. To do so, it juxtaposes the macro level global protection vision with insights into the micro level lived experiences of individuals in need of protection within the ‘worsening realities’ of these FPZs and studies the complex interface between these two perspectives in the so-called meso space.

In this case, the macro level perspective is grounded in IR constructivism’s norm diffusion theory as a contemporary articulation of how protection works. This is augmented with rhetoric generated by the many actors who animate the global protection regime including the UN Secretary General, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. In contrast, using Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan as examples of FPZs, micro level insights into the lived experiences of protection are constructed from empirical data collected through some 970 interviews which I conducted with more than 2,300 individuals in these two contexts, for the most part during periods of acute armed conflict.

The global vision of how protection works assumes that contiguous top-down trajectories exist between the macro and micro level. It is through these pathways that globally articulated norms are expected to penetrate into the micro spaces and generate a protective impact in the lives of individuals at risk. Taking protection as law and protection as physical security as the most apparent global-to-local transmission pathways, efforts to trace these trajectories reveal that there is often little relationship between these two realities.

A meso level lens which spotlights the interface between them reveals profound translation gaps which in effect prevent global norms from penetrating into the micro spaces of FPZs. The meso level perspective illustrates that rather than having been problematized, this translation process is often simply presumed.

The global vision of protection assumes the primacy of globally articulated norms, and sees protection as an inherently a top-down process driven by these norms. It takes law as the primary trajectory through which global norms are likely to be translated into the micro spaces. Shortfalls in this effort have led the global protection regime to progressively reduce the protection promise to that of physical protection. Failures to deliver on even this reduced promise has prompted some to re-articulate of the promise as the humanitarian imperative – which in effect amounts to little more than a ‘gesture’ of solidarity. Examining these presumed global-to-local trajectories through a meso lens reveals critical translation breaches which prevent these global protection norms from actually penetrating into the micro spaces of FPZs.

Thus, while the global vision conceives of protection as a top-down process, contrasting this vision with the micro level realities of FPZs spotlights a distinctly different kind of politics of protection that unfolds in the local spaces of FPZs. Failures to deliver on global promise of protection leave people at risk utterly exposed to the on-going violence that characterizes FPZs. Quite in contrast to the global vision of the ‘worthy victim’ being saved by the external saviour, the failure to deliver on the global promise of protection necessitates that people at risk assume the final responsibility to protect themselves.

In this, the global vision of how protection works has very little correlation with the politics of protection that actually unfold in these micro spaces. Global ideational norms have very little influence on these micro dynamics which are rather governed by local social norms, which rather than being aspiration ideals, are articulations of accepted behaviour. Being forced to bear the responsibility to protect themselves, people at risk typically rely upon so-called ‘auto-protection’ mechanisms, most of which are concerned with tolerating and avoiding deadly violence. However, these efforts are regularly overwhelmed in the quagmire of privatized violence that unfolds within these micro spaces. Profound personal hurt can push people at risk into tolerating their own use of ever-more offensive auto-protection mechanisms as the most viable means of protection. As social environments are transformed within the on-going violence, neighbours are re-imagined as enemies and thus potential sources of deadly threats and the tolerance for the use of violence as a means of self-protection merges with desires for justice and revenge. These micro measures in themselves can quickly take on a magnitude that feeds directly into the broader dynamics of conflict, generating even more protection threats.

In order to gain insight into these multiple and incongruent layers of protection politics, the next section sketches the foundation upon which the state-centric global protection vision is constructed. It demonstrates the extent to which the vision is

constructed upon the assumptions of the 'ideal state'. It then contrasts the theoretical vision of the state with the realities confronted in FPZs. The meso perspective spotlights the interface between these two deeply incongruous perspectives. The disconnects begin to illustrate the extent to which, rather than being problematized, the process of delivering on the global promise of protection is simply assumed by the global protection regime.

Chapter two then sketches the global protection regime as a cumulative and multidimensional construct that has emerged in response to persistent protection failures. The substantive chapters following then build on this foundation, exploring the operationalization of the global protection promise in more detail. While macro level presumptions about the politics of protection are repeatedly contrasted with micro level lived realities of these politics, it is particularly through the meso perspective that the interface between these two extremes is examined, illustrating the multiple severs and interpretive distortions that ultimately prevent globally articulated protection norms from penetrating into the micro spaces of FPZs.

1.2 Sketching the global protection vision

Constructed on the ever 'advancing norms', the global protection vision is ideational and aspirational. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as a principal articulation of this vision is applauded as 'one of the great *aspirational* documents of our human history' (Robinson 1998, p.45, emphasis added). However, in situations of armed conflict where people at risk regularly face imminent threats of potentially deadly violence, an aspirational protection vision is simply not good enough. As the ICRC says, 'norms cannot, in and of themselves, eradicate abuses or be expected to do so' (2013b, p.4).¹ Thus, as said, the acid test is the translation of these ideational norms into concrete protection in FPZs.

Admittedly, this emphasis on translation is not new, with Bayefsky pointing nearly two decades ago to 'a serious rift between standard-setting and implementation' (1996). Already at that time she claimed that 'to a large extent the standards are in place' (Ibid). Robinson agreed that 'the normative work is largely done' (1998, p.48). Indeed, pointing to what he described as 'endless high level rhetoric' around these normative standards, Robinson was already complaining that the actual impact of these efforts was 'quite underwhelming' (1998, p.46). Bayefsky equally underlined that 'the ultimate goal of alleviating human suffering remains elusive' (1996; see also: OHCHR 2005, p.5; UN

¹ Identified as the traditional guardian of IHL, the ICRC is charged with the responsibility 'to take concrete steps to make the law relevant' in the lives of people affected by conflict (Gardam & Charlesworth 2000, p.166).

Security Council 1999a, p.2). Indeed, the critical challenge identified at that time was the translation of these 'advancing norms' into concrete policies and actions (Ogata & Sen 2003, p.26; see also: Robinson 1998, p.48). Nearly two decades later, we continue to face the same issue.

To some extent, this 'translation gap' is explained by Owen's observation that there are 'different expectations and assumptions about what is possible' (2003, pp.1–2). Not everyone *expects* these aspirational 'advancing norms' to deliver a concrete impact, with some drawing an important distinction between ideational efforts that aim to build the normative frame and *change attitudes* as an end in itself; versus the actual concrete *operationalizing* of these ideas (Hafner-Burton & Ron 2009, pp.361–362). While some are satisfied with a purely ideational effort, as stated above, this work focuses on the latter, being concerned with the politics of putting these ideas to work.

However, while seemingly making promises of the latter, the global vision of how protection works actually more accurately reflects the former. Being particularly rooted in constructivism's norm diffusion theory, which emerged in the post-Cold War period as an influential account of how protection works (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Risse *et al.* 1999; Risse *et al.* 2013), 'advancing norms' are seen as the primary means of influence in a conceptualisation that frames protection largely as a process of socializing states.²

The norm diffusion theory claims that states can be socialized into 'appropriate behaviour'³ as defined by these 'advancing norms' (Finnemore 1996a, p.154; Katzenstein 1996, p.2; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse & Sikkink 1999; Wendt 1999; Sikkink 2011, p.211). Being seen as the embodiment of 'collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity' (Jepperson *et al.* 1996, p.54), 'advancing norms' are seen as establishing new standards of conduct, thus informing the evolving expectations about how states 'ought' to act (Katzenstein 1996, p.5; Keck & Sikkink 1998, p.3; Risse & Sikkink 1999, pp.7–9; Ruggie 1998, p.871; Tannenwald 2005, p.8; Wendt 1999, p.82).

These 'advancing norms' are seen to embody leverage necessary to create change due to the fact that they carry moral authority, being developed by so-called '*moral entrepreneurs*' (Becker 1963, cited in Nadelmann 1990, p.482), who promote 'principled

² 'Socialization' is understood as the process of acquiring or indeed the internalization of attitudes, beliefs, values, and interests, and the adoption of new preferences, symbolic meaning and behaviour consistent with those of the community in which the entity being socialized seeks membership (Greenberg 1970, p.3; Risse & Sikkink 1999, p.11; Heinz 2002, p.41; Simmons 2009, p.62).

³ This terminology is attributed to March and Olsen (1998).

ideas'⁴ which progressively gather 'collective intentionality' (Searle 1995, cited in Ruggie 1998, p.869). As they become increasingly 'intersubjective', they are ever more influential as an expression of 'collective expectations' (Axelrod 1986, p.1097; Khagram *et al.* 2002, p.14; Kowert & Legro 1996, p.484; Price & Tannenwald 1996; Risse & Sikkink 1999, p.7; Sikkink 2011, p.11). Capitalising on the leverage generated, so-called '*norm entrepreneurs*' promote compliance with these norms (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, pp.897–898; Nadelmann 1990, pp.481–482; Risse & Sikkink 1999, p.7) relying on the assumptions underpinning the notion of socialization.

As such, ever advancing norms are understood to define 'precise standard of civilised conduct which applies to all governments in the treatment of their citizens' (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.1). However reliance on 'socialization' as the means for prompting this conduct generates a very particular top-down state-centric conception of protection. Protection emerges as an ideational process that largely unfolds in the global space. It is normative based and thus aspirational. Such aspirational processes rely on behaviour change – which being recognized as 'a process, not an event', inevitably requires time (Harvard Medical School 2009). Moreover, it is state-centric both in the sense that it spotlights the socialization process of the state; and that this state-centric effort is an end in itself – the individual at risk is nowhere to be seen in the macro level conception.

Nevertheless, wide consensus has been generated around this basic change process as the way protection works. For example, the respect of human rights is widely seen as a necessary condition for a state to be considered minimally just and decent (Newman 2004, p.358; Pupavac 2005a, p.55; Smith 2005, p.7). Indeed, directly reflecting the essence of 'socialization' as the central process, Orend says that such compliance is 'the price of admission for political respectability' (2002, p.20; see also: Hopgood 2013, p.xii; Risse & Sikkink 2013, p.275).

However, given that in this conception, protection is accepted as a largely macro level process, seen to unfold primarily in the transnational space, the signing of international treaties in effect serves as a proxy indicator of respect of human rights. Ironically, in this view both the Central African Republic and South Sudan would appear to have been fairly well socialized. For example, CAR was a party to the Geneva Conventions (since 1966), and its Additional Protocols (since 1984); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1981);

⁴ 'Principled ideas' are normative ideas held by individuals about what is right and wrong, and just and unjust (Goldstein & Keohane 1993, pp.9–11; Khagram *et al.* 2002, p.14; Price & Tannenwald 1996, p.137).

the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1991); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992) (RULAC 2009; ICRC n.d.).⁵

This treaty-based emphasis was even more evident in South Sudan as a brand new country. For example, just prior to the on-set of its acute crisis in December 2013, OHCHR had stated that their priorities for the country were ‘the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments by the Government’ (2013a). In fact, in June 2013, the UNSG had congratulated the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) for taking ‘preliminary steps towards becoming a party to a number of important human rights and refugee treaties’ (2013b, p.11).

This enthusiasm over these macro level agreements reflects presumptions that ratification correlates directly with improved protection of people at risk. The promise embodied in such commitments is expected to materialise because the signing of treaties is presumed to reflect what the norm diffusion model refers to as ‘*internalization*’, or reflexive compliance with international normative standards (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, p.895; see also: Khagram *et al.* 2002, p.15; Risse & Sikkink 1999, p.7; Sikkink 2011, pp.11–12). This ‘internalization’ is the expression of the socialized state.

However, arguing that constructivists have conflated process with outcome (Hafner-Burton & Ron 2009, p.386), compliance theorists doubt that signed treaties necessarily indicate any change in attitudes. Indeed, they rather point to a multitude of ulterior motives that drive states to engage with global norms – especially those related with protection which hold governments accountable but offer no material return (Hathaway 2007, p.592; Khagram *et al.* 2002, p.14; Moravcsik 2000, p.217). They further emphasise that notoriously weak enforcement mechanisms enable states to ‘decouple’ their conduct in the global realm (ie: commitments made to respect protection norms) from their domestic conduct, (Abbott & Snidal 2000, p.422; Hafner-Burton *et al.* 2008, p.121; Hathaway 2007, p.592).

As such, while ratification can afford a state a ‘socially acceptable’ image, their domestic conduct may well continue to be distinctly non-compliant with critical protection norms (Axelrod 1986, p.1108; Buchanan 2010, p.71; Hathaway 2007, pp.596–7; Krasner 1999, p.32). Thus, such theorists argue that no correlation can necessarily be assumed between ratification and improved protection practices domestically (Hathaway 2007, p.597; Hafner-Burton *et al.* 2008, p.121; Krasner 1999, p.65).

⁵ Further in this line, the on-set of the Séléka crisis in Late 2012 saw the ICRC immediately intensify protection activities designed to ‘encourage the authorities to ratify IHL instruments and enforce existing legislation’ (2012b, p.112).

As one of the broadest indications of the extent to which the global-to-local translation process is not problematized, Hafner-Burton and Ron claim that constructivists mistakenly equate global discursive processes with state reform (2009, p.386-7). Much of the presumptions of global-to-local translation of these normative ideas are rooted in the core assertion that protection is a state-centric process. For those who animate the global protection regime, this is unquestioned. As Donnelly says, the 'centrality of states' in the international protection system is obvious (1999, p.85). This assertions is repeatedly articulated, with the Vienna Declaration for example asserting that the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms 'is the first responsibility of Governments' (OHCHR 1993). More recently, the architects of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) doctrine emphatically (re)declared the fact that 'the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself' (ICISS 2001, p.xi; see also: UN General Assembly 2005, para.138).

However, these assertions shed little light the concrete *politics of protection*. The institutional foundation required to operationalise the protection vision is largely presumed to be in place. Indeed, Risse and Ropp as original architects of the norm diffusion theory have recently observed that it takes 'consolidated statehood for granted' (2013, p.15).⁶ Despite the warning from many commentators of the error of taking the state as a given, or as 'unproblematic', and leaving it unexamined (Herbst 1996, p.144; Migdal 1988, p.xvi; Onuf 2003, p.26; Tickner 1992, p.43), Risse says that the modern statehood and a fully functioning state are assumed 'as a background condition' (2010, p.2). The global protection vision is constructed on an '*idea*' of the state.

Hansen and Stepputat point out that when a geographic entity is recognised nominally as a state, it is almost reflexively *presumed* to embody sovereignty, to provide social order and stability, and to materialize authoritative institutions, infrastructure, and essential services (2001, p.2). Indeed, many academics agree that states are presumed to be capable, legitimate and representative simply due to the title (Call 2008, p.11; Ghani & Lockhart 2009, p.22; Hironaka 2008, p.54; Lakoff 1991, p.1991; Migdal 2001, p.13; Tickner 1992, p.42). As such, the socialization process is simply about generating the *will* of the state to protect (Börzel & Risse 2013, p.63). The institutional capacity and wherewithal to deliver on its protection obligations as defined by the 'advancing norms' are assumed to exist.

⁶ Although Risse and Ropp themselves note that their 1999 articulation of the norm diffusion theory was problematic in that it 'assumed the presence of fully functioning states' (2013, p.4), it remains that many norm entrepreneurs continue to work on the basis of this assumption.

However, as Migdal stresses, the fact that achieving this ‘idea of the state’ has remained elusive in many cases (2001, p.49). Indeed, reflecting Clapham’s observation that the Westphalian model of statehood ‘has not proved universally achievable’, both CAR and South Sudan are examples of what he describes as ‘little more than a pretence’ of a state (2004, pp.78–82; see also Brooks 2005, pp.1159–1168; Herbst 1996, p.144). Suffering profound infrastructural and economic underdevelopment, compounded by on-going situations of protracted violence, both exemplify the weak or failing state (Hills 2000, p.ix; Mehler 2012, p.49; Paris 2004, p.46).⁷ Indeed, epitomising so-called ‘worsening realities’, both contexts erupted into acutely violent crises during this research period. As such, both were even further hampered by the fact that such violence renders systemic collapse almost inevitable (Berdal 2012, p.315; Keen 1998, p.52; Paris 2004, p.46; Provost 2005, p.1).

As such, the global protection vision as it applies in FPZs, is inadvertently constructed on what Hansen and Stepputat describe as ‘the paradox of inadequacy and indispensability’ of the state (2001, p.2). The following section sketches how this paradox plays out in these FPZs.

1.3 Sketching the politics of protection in “fragile protection zones”

In its simplest form, the concrete concept of protection captures the sense of someone at risk being sheltered against danger. However, while referring to the idea of covering, shielding, guarding or defending of someone or something from exposure, injury, damage or destruction, even simple dictionary definitions capture the complexity of the notion by drawing the distinction between the action of protecting; the status of being protected; and the person or thing that protects (Merriam-Webster). While the end objective of protection is widely presumed as a corollary (Fierke 2007, p.13), the global protection vision irrefutably casts the state as the thing that does the protecting. The action within the domestic space is presumed to be carried out especially by state judicial and security institutions. These protective institutions are presumed to be positioned between individuals at risk and the threats they face in “fragile protection zones”, thus comprising a shield that guards or protects these people at risk from imminent threat.

However, in epitomising some of the worst protection quagmires in the world, FPZs pose significant challenges to this vision of how protection works due to two broad characteristics. The first is the retraction, if not utter collapse of the state, which

⁷ Contributing to this is the fact that both are located in an extremely volatile neighbourhood that includes Chad, Sudan, DRC, and Uganda, and violence-ridden territories.

undermines the central vehicle through which protection is assumed to be delivered. Second, is the plague of on-going violence which generates some of the most extreme protection threats and thus some of the most urgent protection needs for people living within these zones. This section sketches some of the contradictions embedded within the global protection vision. It exposes them by contrasting macro level pre-suppositions that underpin the global protection vision with micro level lived realities of FPZs. Further, a meso perspective which spotlights the space in between these two perspectives, reveals the disconnects and the distortions made to ensure a bridging between them.

1.3.1 The Lived Experience of the State

As much as the global view presumes the state to be the primary vehicle through which protection is realised, micro level insights into FPZs spotlight its progressive collapse. In contrasting macro level assumptions of how the state functions with micro level realities, this section illustrates the extent to which the global state-centric vision of how protection works is disconnected from micro level realities. Taking the state as defined in the 1933 Montevideo Convention⁸ as an expression of the so-called ‘ideal state’ upon which the global protection vision is constructed, it deconstructs the state into its component parts and explores the popular experience of each part.

The convention identifies the essential components as: a defined territory; a government; a permanent population; and capacity to enter into relations with the other states. Referring to the state’s capacity to fulfil international treaty obligations (Grant 1998, p.414), this latter element is the dimension that norm entrepreneurs particularly engage with in the transnational space. While this points to a critical disconnect that sits at the front-end of the top-down trajectory of globally articulated protection norms as discussed above, it is the other dimensions that direct the analytic focus into the domestic space and are thus explored here.

1.3.1.1 The State as a Defined Territory

Although it seems fairly evident that the single dimension of a defined territory does not a state make, Maitre argues that sovereignty is nevertheless sometimes awarded ‘purely along territorial lines, without concern for the viability of state institutions contained within those borders’ (2009, p.59). As the world’s newest state, South Sudan is arguably the most recent example of this, having only been defined as a state with its distinct territory since its secession from the north in July of 2011.

⁸ Although no singular definitive definition of statehood has been established, this convention is widely cited as a ‘textual basis for statehood’ (Grant 1998, p.414).

The people of south(ern) Sudan have lived with a long and brutal civil war with the Khartoum regime that stretched from 1956 to 1973 and again from 1982 to 2005, at which point a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005 between the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) and the Khartoum regime, laying the foundation for the south to eventually realize its independence in 2011. However, with an acute armed conflict re-erupting in December 2013, arguably along socio-political fractures that stemmed from this previous civil war, after only two short years as a nation-state, South Sudan slid again into utter chaos, with Maxwell and Santschi noting that it quickly fell from being celebrated as the newest state in Africa to being 'one the most failed states in the world' (2014, p.3).

Thus in addition to the defined territory, the Montevideo Convention equally identifies the 'government' as a component part, with Grant reiterating the necessity of any state having an effective government that operates throughout the whole of its territory (1998, p.414; see also: Charlesworth & Chinkin 2000, p.124). This reflects Krasner's 'domestic sovereignty', which he describes as 'formal organization of political authority within the state and the ability of public authorities to exercise effective control within the borders of their own polity' (1999, p.4).

In this more comprehensive conception, although CAR gained independence from France in 1960, it has hardly fared any better than South Sudan. Indeed, the 'striking' absence of the state in rural areas, captured in the oft repeated claim that 'the state stops at PK-12'⁹ (Bierschenk & de Sardan 1997, p.441; see also: Berman & Lombard 2008, p.69; UNSG 2009a, para.23) has emerged as one of its defining characteristics.¹⁰

As such, while so-called 'domestic sovereignty' is largely presumed as a given in the global protection vision, the realities of FPZs often fall very short of theory, more typically reflecting what some refer to as 'areas of limited statehood' (Börzel & Risse 2013, p.66), in which the state lacks authority and control over much of its defined territory. In efforts to unpack this further, Buzan distinguishes 'the physical base' of the state from 'the institutional expression' (1991, p.65).

1.3.1.2 The 'Institutional Expression' of the State

As an extension of governance, the 'institutional expression' of the state is expected to correspond with the 'defined territory'. Indeed, the global protection vision is constructed upon this assumption, with Newman reminding us that 'the international

⁹ 'PK-12' is an important market area located at the 12-kilometer point from the centre of the capital city Bangui.

¹⁰ The Government of CAR itself had acknowledged that 'the authority of the State does not exist in certain parts of the country' (UNDP & GoCAR 2011, p.9).

legitimacy of state sovereignty rests not only on control of territory, but also upon fulfilling certain standards of human rights and welfare for citizens' (2004, p.358; see also: Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.1). It is through this institutional expression that the state is expected to fulfil these standards. However, the micro level experiences of this dimension of the state in FPZs quickly reveal a starkly different picture.

Central African Republic – Prior to the acute crisis

In 2010, the ICG described CAR as a 'phantom state' which has lacked 'any meaningful institutional capacity' essentially since its conception (2010a, p.2, footnote 1; see also: UN Press 2012). As such, it is unsurprising that even before the Séléka crisis erupted in late 2012, the people of CAR suffered some of the worst development indicators in the world, with the country being ranked 180 of 186 countries in the Human Development Index (UNDP 2013). Especially security services were extremely scarce throughout the whole of country, with Alston reporting that the Government provided 'virtually no protection for civilians outside of Bangui' (2010, p.4).

This institutional shortfall was all too clearly noted by respondents in this research. For example, the southeast corner of the country had been infiltrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) who had been provoking insecurity for some three years. While people in this area speculated that it was indeed the President of the Republic who is responsible to act on their behalf, they could only guess as to why this was failing. The despair that resulted from the perpetual protection failures was illustrated by one man who, being from a smaller rural village, had been forced to flee violent danger many times over. I found him building a traditional hut in an area which had been allocated to newly arriving IDPs who had fled the most recent attacks. The man was alone, explaining that his wife and children had been forced to run in the opposite direction as he and he now did not know if they were alive or dead. He stressed that 'our situation is not a secret', arguing that 'everyone is informed; everyone knows of the problems here'. However, while agreeing that 'the state is responsible', he despondently reported that 'there is nothing; we have received no help; we live with no protection; we have no rights; there is no intervention to save us'. Concluding that 'we are abandoned', he stated with a kind of desolate resignation that 'now we don't know if we have the right to live or not' (1M,IDP-native SiteC,Zemio,Jan10).¹¹ Indeed, sitting in contrast to the global aspirations of universal and inalienable rights, these kinds of reflections which brought people to question their basic worth as human beings were all too common.

¹¹ Relatively direct quotes provided by participants in my field research are used extensively throughout this work. Each is identified with a tag indicating the number of people in the interview, their gender, the date and location, and a small anonymised reminder of the specific interview.

Further, while the utter failure of the state apparatus to protect was systematically noted, people largely presented this as a simple fact. For example, while noting that ‘many people have been killed by the LRA’ and describing the hardships that the LRA had imposed on their lives, two young men who had clearly spent quite some time reflecting on their circumstances reiterated that ‘we know the President is aware; but no firm decision has been taken; we have no security; we will have none until he decides to send forces’ (2M,artisans,Zemio,Dec18). They explained that they just have to wait until the state responds.

When asked if their government was helping them, a *Chef de Quartier* (CdQ) from a long albeit spontaneously established IDP camp in the same zone said that ‘so far we have heard and seen nothing of what the government can do for us; I am not aware of their help’ (1M,CdV,SiteB,Zemio,Dec24). Another CdQ along with his advisors from a neighbouring village that was also under imminent LRA threat were equally disappointed with the non-reaction of the state, stating more proactively that ‘we have told the state of our problems’, but they also helplessly reported that ‘there is no response’ (6M,1CdQ+5M,Mboki,Jan21).

More concretely, others sympathetically acknowledged the very apparent and profound under-resourcing of the state protective institutions. Showing me the FACA compound, right in the centre of which was an old broken-down vehicle on blocks, a *Chef de Groupe* (CdG), as a senior level community leader, acknowledged that ‘they have nothing; they have no vehicles or communication equipment’. Adding that they have to borrow a motorbike or a telephone to be at all functional, he concluded quite simply that ‘they can do nothing for us’ (1M,CdG,Osman, Zemio,Dec20). This fundamental institutional incapacity contrasted sharply with his recounts of the multiple violent incidents that his people had endured at the hands of the LRA.

While this incapacity was apparent throughout the country, a respondent from another zone felt equally compelled to excuse the consequent protection shortfalls, speculating that ‘they would protect us if they had the means’ (1M,with-malaria,Boguila, Nov29). As such, while institutional capacity was essentially non-existent, people in CAR were largely resigned to this, especially outside of the capital.

South Sudan – Prior to the acute crisis

Of course as the newest nation on the planet, South Sudan has a different history, but the end results are similar. The World Bank describes South Sudan as ‘a new nation without a history of formal institutions, rules or administration accepted as legitimate by its

society' (2013).¹² Indeed, pointing to 'a profound lack of capacity' analysts underline that the efforts of the GoSS to develop basic state institutions and to provide essential services have been repeatedly hampered (Lokuji *et al.* 2009, p.16; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.18). Thus, even prior to the on-set of the current crisis, it was widely agreed that the GoSS had proven to be unable to maintain law and order and provide meaningful governance and security (HRW 2013e, p.2; ICG 2011b, pp.26–27; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.18). As such, the country was equally plagued by institutional failures due to the limited reach of state authority, persistent human rights violations by national security institutions, and the failure of the authorities to stop such abuses (HRW 2013e, p.3; see also: ICG 2011a, p.xxii; UNSG 2013b, p.18).

This was all too clearly captured in the stark statement by a group of elderly men sitting together in the late afternoon under a large tree in their home town, speculating on how they could respond to a recent spike in attacks on nearby communities by a competing tribe. Having recently been forcibly disarmed by the SPLA (ie: the national military) and thus feeling that they were now unable to defend themselves against such attacks, they clearly expected little to come from the SPLA, stating that 'our government is too weak; it is failing us' (5M,Old men,Bor,Oct05). Three younger men from the same community agreed that 'our government is contributing nothing' (3M,Bor,Oct07).

Indeed, many respondents explained that with the end of the previous civil war with the north, they had had hopes for significant improvements. This was amplified with independence gained in 2011. However, as many analysts report, the South Sudanese population has for the most part, never experienced the benefits of a state (Reeve 2012, p.42; see also: South *et al.* 2012, p.15; World Bank 2013). Respondents repeatedly corroborated this. For example, while agreeing that the protection of the rights of citizens is theoretically the concern of the government, an elderly local Chief in the northwesterly part of the country chuckled sardonically at the thought. While indicating that 'the government doesn't really think about these things very much', he was very adamant that 'the government is doing nothing good' (1M,Old-chief,Wau,Sept06).

Indeed, South Sudan was renowned for having some of the worst human development indicators in the world. Only 27% of the population over 15 years of age are literate, and this drops to 16% among females; while some 85% of the working age population is involved in non-waged, low productivity subsistence agricultural and

¹² Starting 'from a rudimentary institutional base, having inherited few functional governance systems' (2013, p.1), Almquist Knopf says that 'even among Sub-Saharan Africa's many weak states, the shallowness of South Sudan's government capacity and institutional depth make it an outlier' (Ibid, p.8).

pastoralist activities (World Bank 2013). In fact, these realities in themselves foster low expectations. Given that knowledge on what the state is expected to do is not inherent, such massive illiteracy rates left people in FPZs to make sense of their world based on their personal experiences – where the state was largely non-existent. In this sense, Buzan's assertion that the state exists as 'an idea held in common by a group of people' (1991, p.63; see also: Clapham 1999, p.28) has a particular importance in FPZs. Indeed, distinguishing it from 'the physical base' and 'the institutional expression' Buzan identifies 'the idea' of the state as a distinct component part of the state, which is explored in the next section.

1.3.1.3 The Idea of the State – From the local perspective

Constructed on the notion of human rights, the global protection vision casts the state as the bearer of the *duty* to protect, while the citizen is seen as holding the *right* to be protected (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.3). Understood as a process that governs the relationship between the individual and the State (OHCHR & CESR 2013, p.11), this conception of protection is seen as empowering the individual to claim her rights from the state as the duty-bearer (Ignatieff 2001, p.18; Moravcsik 2000, p.217; OHCHR 2005, p.2; Pupavac 2005a, p.55; Robinson 1998, p.46). At the heart of this is the idea of a 'social contract' which, as per Hobbes, reflects the idea that, being unable to independently ensure their protection, people form societies and agree to be governed in efforts to enhance their security (Abramchayev 2004, p.851; see also Heyman 1991, p.515). This grounds assumptions of an inherent bond between the people and the state, with the government presumed to be formed to protect the people (Abramchayev 2004, pp.852).

Describing this more organically, Buzan emphasises 'the idea' of the state which is constructed among the people of the state (1991, p.63-65; see also: Clapham 1999, p.28) creating a kind of glue that bonds the state:citizen relationship. He suggests that as a society develops around the notion of the state, it becomes increasingly dependent on it as a 'lynchpin' in terms of socio-economic issues (1991, p.38). With the state emerging as 'the mechanism' through which people achieve security, peoples' security becomes 'inseparably entangled' with it (Ibid). However envisioned, some form of symbiotic relationship is assumed to exist between the state and its citizens. But the above already begins to indicate that in both examples of FPZs, even prior to the current crises, this 'idea' of the state was largely absent, as was any form of dependent 'entanglement'.

Central African Republic

Especially outside of the capital in CAR, people vested little in the idea of the state and its government, with a very large charactered women's leader who was widely

identified as the matriarch of this marginalised community in the north of the country explained, 'people don't really think of the state; they just have to find their own solutions' (1M,Mama-Yagouda,Boguila,Dec07).

Indeed, if people in rural CAR thought of their relationship with the state at all, it was usually in emotive relational terms, with many referring to the authorities as 'parents'. In this sense, two brothers from the same northern community claimed dejectedly that 'our government does not think of us' (2M,brothers-near-compound,Boguila,Dec02). A very dynamic woman from the LRA affected area of the country, who as a single parent was working hard to support her six small children through distillery activities, similarly concluded again in a resigned manner that 'our government does not care about us' (1F, distiller-lady,Zemio,Dec18).

Typically, the state:citizen relationship was understood in terms of inequitable power dynamics, with people systematically indicating a very distinct sense of subordination and powerlessness. As opposed to being seen as a duty bearer *obliged* to deliver essential services to its citizens, the state is rather seen as a malevolent parent, wielding all the power over its powerless children. This recalls the lack of sense of *entitlement* alluded to above. For example, indicating that they simply have to tolerate state protection shortfalls, the above mentioned CdQ and his advisors who had reported their security problems to the authorities in Bangui stressed that 'we have no force; we the people are under the state; the state has all the authority' (6M,CdQ+5M,Mboki,Jan21).

As such, efforts to make sense of their dire security circumstances typically led less to a railing against state shortfalls, but rather took the form of what often amounted to excuses. For example, while explaining the important role the church plays given the stress the community was under, three male church leaders in the LRA area suggested that the national military was unable to protect them because 'the killing of one of our FACA¹³ by the LRA would cause a very big problem' (3M,Church-reps,Zemio,Dec22). In this line of reasoning, they concluded that the FACA had actually been ordered 'from above' to avoid such risks. While many respondents agreed with this speculation, they discussed it in a distinctly non-judgemental manner. The prioritization of the safety of the FACA over themselves somehow made sense to them.

With the on-set of the Séléka crisis, the absence of state/citizen 'entanglement' was further illustrated by a group of local leaders from the northern part of the country that was first to be occupied by Séléka. While observing that these rebels were 'against the government in Bangui', these leaders wondered 'why did they stop here and cause us all

¹³ FACA is the acronym for the national Forces Armées Centrafricaines.

these problems' before moving on to Bangui? In this, they made no link with Séléka's anti-government agenda and themselves, claiming that 'we have nothing to do with the government of Bangui' (3M,CdQ-Christian,Ndele,Mar13). They clearly saw themselves as having no role in the Séléka's political contest with the central authorities. This played out somewhat differently in South Sudan.

South Sudan

In South Sudan, some might argue that this lack of state:citizen 'entanglement' is due to the nascency of the state and people's lack of access to relevant information. I discussed this extensively with a man who I knew some 15 years earlier in his role as NGO:community liaison in the previous war. Since then, he had managed to obtain a university degree in development studies and was now a regional level Commissioner appointed by the central government. In this role, he was well positioned to observe that 'people don't really know what the role of the government is supposed to be' (1M, Commissioner-Panyiajar,Bentiu,Aug15). From a slightly different perspective, a young man who had been a child soldier during the previous war added that 'people don't exactly know their rights'. Having learned about rights during stints in refugee camps during the previous war, he also received some further training from the INGO he was now working with. Thus, as a 'protection officer', he explained that 'people don't know what they can expect or even ask for from their government; they even don't know who to complain to' (1M,INGO:staff,Pariang,Aug09).

Indeed, for many, the government was simply a distant and ill-defined notion. For example, while agreeing that 'the government is there', a large group of individuals who had gathered around while I was discussing with a few locals in a marginalised zone in the southeast corner of the country stated very frankly that 'we depend on it for nothing' (25M&F,group,Kapoeta, Aug25).

An important dimension in this was the lack of experience of government personnel, with the above Commissioner adding that 'government officials themselves don't know what they are supposed to do' (1M,Commissioner-Panyiajar,Bentiu,Aug15). The group above built on this. Doubting their added value, they wondered rhetorically 'what do they know anyway; they are up there; they do not manage well; whatever comes up to them just disappears; we report problems to the government, but they just talk and talk; nothing comes from it' (25M&F,civilians,Kapoeta,Aug25). Describing the state as being 'like a moving wind', a young man from the same area who was etching out a living mining alluvial gold captured just how nebulous the idea of the state was for them, concluding that 'we don't yet take it too seriously' (1M,Youth-panner,Kapoeta,Aug24).

A group of elder men in the northeast of the country, describing themselves as former SPLA soldiers, captured the equally widely held impression of the government's disinterest in the population when they stated that 'the government is still new; it is still busy with itself' (7M,elder-men,Pariang,Aug11). Agreeing that 'the government deals with only itself and not with normal people', a group of women who had recently returned from the Kakuma refugee camp after having been displaced in the previous conflict stressed that 'the government only works with one section of the people; the government is only for big people; it is only for those who are in the government; it is not for the average people'. Concluding that they as the normal people were 'just left there' on their own they said 'we are just loitering here, we are not feeling like citizens' (4F,KakumaWomen,Bor,Oct08). Indeed, the ICG equally reported that many rural communities 'feel marginalised' (2011b, p.26).

However, more than disinterest, many also underlined the proactive self-interest on the part of those in government. As our Commissioner explained, 'many people in the government think of their position as a personal opportunity' (1M,Commissioner-Panyiajar, Bentiu,Aug15). In this line, a young and energetic Member of Parliament (MP) who had been a refugee in Australia during the previous war explained, with a distinct curiosity for the profound dysfunction of the system within which he was working, that 'us MPs are split between those who stayed in the bush and fought in the war, and those who were refugees and got an education; these groups discuss this problem of corruption; the ones from the bush say "this is our repayment"; they say "once we are satisfied, then you young ones can bring development"'. Concluding that 'now we can just wait' (1M,AustralianMP, Juba,Aug23), he doubted that the situation would improve any time soon.

Indeed, observing that 'too much money is going into people's pockets,' many respondents concluded that their leaders only look after their own interests, reflecting what analysts describe as a pervasive sense of injustice and 'perceptions of widespread corruption and government disinterest in citizens' (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.5; see also: ICG 2011b, p.4).

At the same time, the idea of the 'government' nevertheless tends to loom large in the imagination of people, with a prevalent sense of untouchable superiority and privilege granted to government officials. Indeed, quite the opposite to the state;citizen relationship being constructed on a social contract, with individuals being empowered to hold their state authorities to account, the ICG underlines that political power is more typically maintained 'not by popular legitimacy, but through coercion, control of state assets and institutions, and a system of patronage' (2011b, p.5).

Arguably, this finds its roots in the inherently problematic transformation of rebel leaders into state authorities. The above mentioned 2005 CPA designated a primary role to the SPLA/M in the newly formed GoSS (IGAD 2005, p.33). They have since dominated the government (Deng 2011, p.10; see also: Almquist Knopf 2013, pp.11–12; UNMISS 2014, p.1). Many of the ‘influential commanders’ who have ‘long and brutal war records’ emerged as the ‘political elites’ of South Sudan (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.24; Lokuji *et al.* 2009, p.15; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.17). This conflating of the military with civilian identities has created a mentality among many political and military elites that using, or at least threatening the use of force is the best way of getting results (McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.20; see also: Almquist Knopf 2013, p.23; Branch & Mampilly 2005, p.7). Indeed, as a researcher, I myself confronted this attitude more than once.

With this inevitable militarization, civilian politics has since been characterised by a ‘domineering approach’ based on intimidation and the use of force with a ‘winner-take-all mindset’ underpinning what is fundamentally ‘a politics of exclusion’ (ICG 2011a, p.i; 2011b, p.12).

In this line, a group of elder quite ragged looking men who quite proudly described themselves as former members of the SPLA, expressed clear pleasure with the idea that ‘the former struggle liberated the country’. However, claiming that ‘we still have no democracy’, they bitterly claimed that ‘we are still under military rule; leaders can just put on their uniforms; we the people can just be quiet’ (5M, former-SPLA, Pariang, Aug10). Another man from the same village stressed with a distinct note of intimidated subordination that ‘we are not the leaders; it is the leaders who are in control; those leaders do not listen to us; we don’t have any rights’ (1M, farming, Pariang, Aug13). Indeed, the ICG agrees that ‘popular dissent’ has long been ‘suppressed by a fear of consequences: physical, political or otherwise’ (2011b, p.5).

In a profoundly patriarchal environment that has long been seeped in violence, people have naturally adopted a position of strong deference to authority. In this, Gullick points out that ‘most societies in Southern Sudan are ‘hierarchically structured’, a fact that leaves individuals ill-equipped to challenge people in authority or question their decisions (2009, p.44). As such, quite the opposite to seeing themselves as entitled rights-holders, many respondents expressed profound deference, if not outright fear of their government. In the face of on-going intimidation, there was a very clear sense of impotence. For example, in the above mentioned village that had been forcibly disarmed by the SPLA, a group of men and women discussing together after their Sunday church services

concluded that ‘there is nothing that the individual can do; the government has all the power’ (4M&3F,post-church-group,Bor,Oct07).

Illustrating this all too well, a very aged but seemingly wisened Elder who had been forcibly displaced, along with much of his community, by the government who wanted to extract oil from their area explained that ‘people are afraid to discuss with the government’. Recalling the idea of the state as the parent, he explained that ‘people think of the government like the father, and people are like small children; everyone knows that as a small boy you don’t approach your father; you have to wait to be called’ (1M,Elder Displaced,Bentiu,Aug04). As such, he was convinced that it was very normal that people, including leaders like himself, should not approach government officials.

Further, when asked if the government should report to their citizens, he laughed ironically. Although he did eventually agree that ‘this could be good’, he was clearly not convinced such a thing was possible, saying ‘I don’t know anything; it is for the government to decide; I will just wait; we don’t know what the government will do’ (1M, ElderDisplaced,Bentiu,Aug04). As such, even the community leaders see themselves as being profoundly subordinate to the perceived authority of the state. Thus, whether out of fear or reverence, the average citizen sees the government as inaccessible. Even before the current crisis, commentators agreed that ‘most South Sudanese have minimal to no interaction with the government in Juba’ (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.31), adding that the government’s ‘often overbearing engagement with citizens’ has undermined their confidence in the state (Ibid, p.6).

As such, in both cases, even before the more acute crises erupted, there was little or no indication of Buzan’s anticipated ‘inseparable entanglement’ between the state and its population. Indeed, even more fundamentally, this also corroborates Gellner’s observation that social contract theories are themselves ‘a kind of foundation myth’ (1995, p.62; see also: Sandel 1998 quoted in Kirtsoglou 2006, p.79). Nevertheless, closely tied to this ‘myth’ is the persistent assumption that the state has a monopoly on the *legitimate* use of force throughout its territory.

1.3.1.4 State monopoly on violence

In addition to the global protection vision presuming that the institutional capacity of the state to protect exists, the vision also embodies a preventive capacity. Based on the now-classic Weberian definition of the state as ‘a compulsory association which organizes domination’ in which the state claims ‘the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory’ (cited in Migdal 2001, p.13), violent threat is presumed to be largely contained. However, as has been stated, as much as FPZs are characterised by failing

protective institutions, they are equally characterised by perpetual violence. The failure of this presumed 'monopoly on violence' is at the root of this second defining characteristic.

However in actuality, this problem simply provides yet another lens through which the collapse of state institutions is made visible. Unsurprisingly, the control of the use of force relies upon the reach of the state and its institutions functioning across the whole of its defined territory. The failed institutional expression of the state in FPZs equates with the state's loss of monopoly on the use of armed force, which creates the conditions that allow for a multitude of forms of violence to emerge within these zones (Berdal 2012, p.315; Börzel & Risse 2013, p.66; Kalyvas 2006, p.58; Moller 2004, p.82). As Keen says, 'it is the sense that anything can be done, that there are no consequences for bad actions, that abusers are emboldened by each other, that a particular group of people has no rights, and that violence may even be fun' (2008, p.215). In both cases, the limited reach of the state has allowed for the proliferation of armed actors through the country.

Central African Republic

As indicated above, due to limited reach of state authority, CAR has long struggled with on-going armed conflict, banditry and widespread lawlessness throughout the country, with civilians regularly being the target of arbitrary executions, kidnappings and other egregious human rights abuses (Alston 2010, p.2).¹⁴ The absence of the state in rural areas has also allowed for multiple armed groups to operate (UNSG 2013a, p.1; see also: UNDP & GoCAR 2011, p.9; UNSG 2007, p.14).¹⁵ As mentioned, the southeast of the country is occupied by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), originally a Ugandan insurgency, which entered CAR in May 2009 and has had 'almost free range in the south east' since, with the ICG pointing to a profoundly inadequate army and President Bozizé's lack of concern beyond Bangui as enabling factors (ICG 2010a, p.1; see also: Alston 2010, p.9).

Further, in the absence of formal protection institutions, many self-defence groups have formed, which Lombard reports are regularly organized by disgruntled politicians into rebel groups (2013a). Indeed, closely tied to this is the country's notoriously turbulent political history, with the vast majority of its multiple power transitions since independence having been through violent coups (BBC 2014b; ICG 2013a; Mehler 2012, p.53). Chronic state fragility compounded by these repeated episodes of political violence have led to the

¹⁴ This recalls Kaldor's so-called 'new wars' which involve complex networks of state and non-state actors with most violence being targeted against civilians (2012, p. vi).

¹⁵ Importantly, not only have the national security forces failed to protect the population against such attacks, but they themselves have also been responsible for widespread atrocities against civilians (Alston 2010, p.9).

‘the abdication of proper governmental responsibilities’ (Muna 2014, p.16), and a similarly ingrained ‘a winner-takes-all political culture and a preference for short-term gain’ among the political elite who are said to treat power ‘as licence to loot’ and distribute favours to their ethnic group; a style of leadership that has fuelled jealousy and prompted ‘disenfranchised groups to take up arms for a bigger slice of the cake’ (ICG 2010b, p.i). Recalling the militarization of civilian politics described above, Mehler similarly notes that elite stakeholders often straddle dual roles ‘as violent entrepreneurs and as civilian politicians’ (2011, p.117). It was precisely in this spirit that the Séléka¹⁶ launched their offensive in December 2012.¹⁷

However, the different dimensions of this ‘dual role’ itself are perceived differently according to perspective. For example, from the out-set, the international community framed the Séléka crisis in political terms, being defined as a ‘*coup d’état*’ with the violence seen as a political struggle for control of the state (HRW 2013a; ICG 2013a). Given that the state is recognised as the central political actor, long-standing IR folklore such as Clausewitz’s oft cited assertion that war is ‘the continuation of politics by other means’ (see for example: Arendt 1969, p.8-9) goes far in substantiating macro assumptions that armed conflict has a political basis and that political contestation is the driver of violence in armed conflict.¹⁸

As such, this political interpretation was sustained from the macro view despite the fact that the violence perpetrated by the Séléka ‘rebels’, almost singularly civilian targeted, persisted and in some cases even escalated after the presumed political objective – the seizure of state power – was achieved.¹⁹ Although such violence sits in stark contrast to the international standards established by global protection norms, it is not completely rejected because when framed as ‘politics by other means’, violence is inherently seen as a strategic instrument applied to achieve political ends (Besteman 2002, p.2). In this view, war is given a certain respectability (Leander 2004, p.69; Sassòli *et al.* 2011, p.3; Tickner

¹⁶ ‘Séléka’ means ‘coalition’ in Sangho, a national language of CAR.

¹⁷ A January 2013 UN Resolution (2088) noted that the ‘serious security vacuum’ throughout the country had created the space for armed insurgency (UN Security Council 2013b, p.1).

¹⁸ These assumptions are further propagated by IHL which presupposes that parties to an armed conflict have rational aims (Sassòli *et al.* 2011, p.2).

¹⁹ The human cost has been high in CAR, with analysts suggesting that some 25% of the country’s 4.7 million people have been displaced due to the Séléka crisis (UNHCR 2014, p.1). Although mortality rates are again difficult to estimate, claims are that ‘thousands of people have been killed’ (Giffen & Keenan 2014; see also: HRW 2015; Muna 2014, p.8). While statistical measurements of the human consequences remain vague, it is readily evident that a profound physical price has been and continues to be paid. Moreover, the intangible psychological implications, which are seldom mentioned, are unimaginable.

1992, p.37), and violence is thus legitimized (Tilly 2002, p.173; see also: Leander 2004, p.69).²⁰

However, from the micro perspective, respondents living the experience of this violence gave the political framing little merit. Arguing that 'this is not from the people; it is done by some few elites', a former civil servant in Bangui said 'it is the ones at the top who have caused these problems among the people'. Being in a position to be particularly resentful given his vulnerability due to the fact that, in addition to being associated with the Bozizé regime, he was immobile due to a long-time progressive degenerative disease that had left him in a wheelchair, this man reflected with regret that 'they want power; and they get it through provoking violence among the people' (1M,paralyzed,Cite-II,Aug07). An influential Muslim women's leader in Bangui similarly emphasized this manipulation of popular resentments by 'people on top', agreeing that 'they willingly use violence against the people to gain personal power' (1F,Muslim,women-leader,Bangui,Aug23). However, she was also extremely exasperated with the fact that a number of men had allowed themselves to be so manipulated.

Nevertheless, any claims that the Séléka was driven by a political agenda were largely dismissed, with respondents rather focusing on their on-going abuses. Being seen as brutal perpetrators of violence, driven by personal gain, the Séléka lacked all legitimacy as political actors in the eyes of much of the local population.²¹ Denying that they were 'real rebels' in any political sense, three men who as former civil servants had been forced to flee to a displacement camp that developed next to the Peacekeepers compound, very agitatedly described them as a criminal gang, repeatedly asserted that 'these ones, they are bandits; this is just banditry' (3M,wired-IDPs,FOMAC,Ndele,Mar14).

Indeed, a dynamic women's leader from within this same northern village which was one of the first to be occupied by the Séléka and continued to be located on the front line until the Séléka move on to Bangui, simply scoffed at the idea that they had a political agenda, declaring resentfully that 'these Séléka are not here for power; they have stayed here to loot' (1F,PresWomAss@base,Ndele,Mar09).²² Respondents doubted they had any intension of taking on the role of responsible leaders, with two Christian women from the

²⁰ Although some researchers argue that the idea of warfare as a political project has been put into question as a result of research on civil wars (Péclard and Mechoulam 2015, p.11), the point here is that these macro level realist assumptions continue to influence reflexive assumptions.

²¹ Mampilly points out that rebel movements have the potential to take up constructive roles only after the armed group has 'moved beyond mere looting to actually taking control of a specific area' (2011, p.4).

²² This recalls the notion of the political economy of war which was developed the 1990s. It emphasises the influence of the economic dimension on the calculations and behaviours of the rational armed actors and thus the causes and persistence of armed conflict (see for example: Berdal and Malone 2000, p.1-2; Collier & Hoeffler 2000, p. 25-26; Keen 1996, 2012).

same village reasoning that ‘if Séléka wanted to take control of the government they would have moved on to Bangui; but they are remaining here now; they are just looting’.²³ While arguing that ‘they just have come here to take all our things back to their own area, they lamented the fact that ‘the Séléka are certainly not trying to rebuild the country’ (2F,eglise @base,Ndele,Mar09).

Indeed, the eventual seizure of the state in March 2013 by Séléka propelled the country to new heights of chaos. Reflecting Provost’s observation that armed conflict causes even more breakdown of order and institutions (2005, p.344; see also: Keen 1998, p.52; Weir 2009, pp.11–12), being an anti-government movement, the Séléka systematically targeted civil servant and state institutions, especially those related to security (African Union 2013b, para.15; OHCHR 2013d, p.9). As all such actors were forced into hiding, state institutions literally folded, pushing what was already a profoundly weak state into total collapse.

By May the UNSG reported that the country was ‘plunging into a state of general anarchy marked by a complete breakdown of law and order’ (2013a, p.5).²⁴ As a group of traders from Bangui who had had their kiosks repeatedly looted once the Séléka had also taken the capital angrily complained, ‘the Séléka are not restoring peace or security; they are just causing more problems; they are only implementing systems of banditry’ (5M, Youth,Kolongo-II,July26). What were already profoundly weak state structures collapsed into total disarray (OHCHR 2013b, p.6; Vircoulon & Lesueur 2014; ICG 2013b, p.1).

Although the weak institutional capacity prior to this crisis had been widely acknowledged, people nevertheless repeatedly regretted the loss of their state institutions. Countless respondents lamented the fact that ‘all state functionaries have fled; what can we do when all the people in the government don’t exist’ (4F,DRC-CPF,Kabo,Feb05). Their raw exposure to what proved to be volatile and unpredictable armed actors provoked a deep sense of fear. As such, even what were deeply inadequate institutions were profoundly missed. Speaking quietly for fear of being overheard by the armed elements who now roamed throughout their community and could retaliate ‘in any way; at any moment’, a group of women who lived near a recently established Séléka base stated that ‘now we have no authorities to report our problems to; there is no one to maintain order; now we are abandoned’ (9F,Christians-nearby-Séléka,Ndele,Mar13).

²³ Indeed, many saw this looting as adding insult to injury, with a local leader explaining that ‘we know that the Séléka take all the materials they loot back to Chad [for re-sale]; this now makes people here very angry’ (1M,CdQMandaba,Aug08).

²⁴ In June, HRW reported that ‘Séléka fighters are [still] killing civilians and burning villages to the ground while some villagers are dying in the bush for lack of assistance’ (2013b).

Many respondents spoke of a profound sense of betrayal by the authorities who fled. An advisor to a Chef in a quartier in the north from which all formal authorities had fled, very aggressively complained that 'we are very disappointed with our authorities; they have deserted us, leaving us here alone' (5M,CdGwith-angry-man,Batangafo,Feb21). Adding bitterly that those who fled were 'only thinking of their own security' he resented the fact that they had been left behind to face the Séléka on their own.

While fragile states are generally characterized by glaring gaps and breaches between their role as protector and their will and capacity to do so (Brooks 2005, p.1160; Ghani & Lockhart 2009, pp.3–5; Herbst 1996, p.144; Migdal 1988, p.xvi), in this case the resoundingly weak state institutions had been pushed even deeper into utter collapse. People at risk were intimately exposed to on-going violent threat, with no illusion of a protective buffer between them and the perpetrators of these threats. Illustrating just how precarious their situation was, a CdQ from one of the early occupied towns showed me the extensive bruises he received during a 'Séléka beating' which he said he got for asking the leaders to stop their troops from harassing the population.

Having been made intimately aware of the power differentials characterising the relationship between the population and the armed actors, when asked how he thought they as civilians would manage, he simply shrugged his shoulder, asking 'what *can* we do' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11). All indications were that people simply needed to keep their heads down, tolerate the on-going abuses, and hope that it would end soon. However, this was not to be the case. Indeed, although analysts agree that security and justice institutions in such zones are either 'unreliable or non-existent' (Weir 2009, pp.11–12; see also: Baker 2009, 104; Ball 2007, p.511; OHCHR 2005, p.10; Provost 2005, p.1), this took on a whole new set of implications when the Séléka elements installed themselves within state institutions.

Rebels as Protectors - Séléka as National Authorities

While the Bozizé regime was forced into utter collapse, space was created for the Séléka, born as an insurgency, to reinvent itself in the role of the state. Despite the fact that much of the local population felt that they were being 'occupied', Péclard and Mechoulán observe that 'rebel movements represent the *de facto* public authority in the areas under their control', and as such, often quickly establish a new kind of 'order', taking

on a political role and engaging in 'governance' of some form (2015, p.6-7; see also: Mampilly 2011, p.2).²⁵

In CAR this was fostered by the fact that OHCHR was also quick to framed the Séléka, not as armed belligerents, but as the legally bound entity bearing the primary duty to protect the citizens of CAR (2013c, p.18; see also: UN Secretary-General 2013, p.8). This reframing immediately conjures up notions of the above described Weberian state, which implicitly extends tremendous powers of control to these so-called authorities. In line with this idea of how the politics of protection are supposed to work, norm entrepreneurs were equally quick to focus their socialization efforts on this new set of 'authorities'. For example, Amnesty International asserted that they must immediately 'reconstitute basic government structures and institutions' as well as take 'steps to restore security and the rule of law' (2014, p.6). This despite the fact that, at the same time, the Séléka troops were regularly described as lacking even basic discipline and training (UN Secretary-General 2013, p.8).

While the calls by norm entrepreneurs were obviously an exceptionally tall order given that few of these institutions existed prior to the crisis and what did was now in utter ruins, this macro level process in general reflected utter disregard for the fact that the Séléka as 'rebel cum state authorities', would not function as a 'typical' state. A distinctly different politics of protection is evident through a meso lens that spotlights the fact that rebels do inevitably engage in some form of governance in the areas they control, their actions are fundamentally driven by self-interest (Arjona et al. 2015, p.1; Kasfir 2015, p.21; Mampilly 2011, p.27).

While Mampilly compares these self-interested non-state actors with 'bandits' (2011, p.28), Arjona et al. notes that although they do regularly engage in criminal behaviour, they have a different kind of motivation than pure criminals because of the importance of their relationship with the civilian population, with their governance choices often shaping this relationship (2015, p.3). Nevertheless, because of these complicated relations with the local population, Kasfir notes that their governance is inevitably based on the use or threat of the use of force (2015, p.21). As such, even though they may provide some security in some cases, they are equally as likely to cause harm to the civilian population (Kasfir 2015, p.22; Mampilly 2011, p.28).

In this light, the macro level re-characterization of Séléka as state authority was utterly unconvincing for the population under their control. With the relationship continuing

²⁵ A recently emerging field of study explores the actual governance practices of rebels over the populations living within the territories they control (Arjona et al. 2015; Mampilly 2011; Péclard & Mechoulam 2015).

to be based on coercion, menace and intimidation, the majority of respondents refused this rag-tag group as their authorities. Many community authorities asserted that ‘the Séléka doesn’t have authority here; we don’t want them here’ (2M,PresSiteB,Kabo,Jan06). Underlining that ‘they are *rebels*’ two men who had held posts with the former regime asserted that ‘these rebels are *not* the legal government’ (2M,MayorsOffice;Ndele,Mar18).

Seeing their presence in terms of ‘occupation’, local populations resentfully observed as the Séléka quickly installed themselves into government roles within their communities. Even Muslim respondents, who were generally assumed to be somehow more sympathetic to the Séléka’s agenda, expressed displeasure with a leader of a group of cattle-keepers from the north lamenting the fact that ‘the Séléka now control all of the government posts’, highlighting their lack of legitimacy to do so (1M,MusElevere,Ndele,Mar18). With a derisive laugh, the large charactered women’s leader introduced above caustically stated that ‘Séléka are now the authorities of the town’ (1F,PresWomAss@base,Ndele,Mar09).

However, despite this bitter resentment, most people complained about the Séléka in a very subdued manner. Due to fears of being overheard and facing retaliation, other members of this women’s association equally bitterly acknowledged the inevitable, pointing out that ‘the Séléka are taking control of these things’ (3F,poor@base,Ndele,Mar09); ‘we now live under the orders of the Séléka’ (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar09).

Rather than seeing them as protectors, the above mentioned group of women located near the Séléka base highlighted their on-going misconduct, stating that ‘our real problems are with those men; if they want to beat you, they can; if they want to steal they can; we have no solution to this’ (9F,Christians by Séléka,Ndele,Mar13). As such, rather than seeing them as any kind of legitimate authorities, these armed actors were systematically associated with a permanent sense of threat.

They were begrudged by most respondents, with a young man who was very distressed over the fact that his father, who was a CdQ, had been badly beaten by these armed actors, deeply resented the fact that ‘the Séléka now see themselves as the masters of the town’ (1M,Son CdG,ArtisanalQuartier,Ndele,Mar12). Stating that ‘we have our worries about them; we fear them’ a leader of a group of IDPs captured the sense of imminent and unpredictable threat when recalling that ‘we have been chased before by these people’ he concluded that ‘we fear the same thing will happen again’ (1M,PresSiteB,Kabo,Feb06).

Living very overtly with this threat, one man, who as a mechanic had been called upon by the Séléka to work for them, was now under continual armed surveillance

because he had refused to do their bidding. Reiterating that ‘they are not men of the state’, he stressed that ‘they do what they want; they can do whatever is in their head; with or without reason, they can just kill someone’ (1M,Safari-man,Ndele,Mar13). Having met with him on the porch of his semi-permanent house which he had previously been forced to flee many times, and which indeed had been looted multiple times over by the Séléka, I observed the many armed men patrolling around his home, and could thus somehow appreciate his distress when he concluded that ‘we are afraid of these men’.

These micro level insights on how the politics of protection unfold within FPZs shed some very harsh light on the state-centric global protection vision of how protection is presumed to function. Especially in acute crises, the state as the protector not only lacks institutional *capacity* and the *will* to protect in a passive sense, it is also often driven by the proactive intent to abuse the population in its drive to meet its own interests. Recalling Hansen and Stepputat’s ‘paradox of inadequacy and indispensability’ of the state (2001, p.2), Gould points out that at the root of this paradox is ‘the contradiction of pledging trust in an entity that is notorious for its unworthiness’ (2005, p.65). The realities of FPZs take such observations to a whole new level. While the global protection vision doggedly casts the state as ‘protector’, its role as perpetrator can only be seen as a distortion. It cannot fully engage with the reality that the state is all too often both the problem and the solution (Booth 1991, p.320; Hafner-Burton, 2013, p.5; Maroya 2003, p.283). Nevertheless, South Sudan provides an example of yet another version of the state as protector gone badly wrong.

South Sudan

Recalling the weak reach of the state before the current crisis, Reeve had emphasised that there was no state monopoly of violence in South Sudan (2012, p.40), adding that the transition from the CPA to independence had had ‘relatively little impact on the dynamics of safety and protection of civilians’ (2012, p.7). Indeed, analysts have repeatedly noted that despite the official conclusion of the previous civil war in 2005, on-going violence has since persisted throughout large parts of the country (Branch & Mampilly 2005, p.1; HSBA 2012, p.1; ICG 2011b, p.i; OHCHR 2013a; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.11), with Human Rights Watch (HRW) reporting that in some areas ‘violence and impunity for violent crimes have become the norm’ (2013d, p.10).

Indeed, many attribute this on-going violence to the history of the previous civil war with the Khartoum regime (Branch & Mampilly 2005, p.4; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.9; ICG 2011a, p.i; ICG 2011b, p.9) in which civilians were pulled directly into the dynamics of violence along many lines both by Khartoum tactics as well as through the extreme south-

on-south violence, particularly associated with the 1991 split within the SPLA (ICG 2002, p.XI). During that spate of 'intra-ethnic violence', warring factions are said to have 'turned their guns against each other's entire populations' triggering a downward spiral in which multiple warlords emerged, each preying upon one the other's populations, with Khartoum strategically fuelling this internal fragmentation (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.10; Hutchinson 2001, p.308; Jok & Hutchinson 1999, p.128; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.13; Metelits 2004, p.71).

Many analysts anticipated that this history would continue to impact on South Sudan well into its future (ICG 2011a, p.3; Jok 2014, p.1; Kincheloe 2011, p.4; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.9,11). Underlining that 'memories are long, and war-related bitterness runs deep' McEvoy and LeBrun have argued that managing that the South Sudan political environment would be 'a fragile balancing act' (2010, p.9; see also: ICG 2011a, p.i).

However, rather than trying to mend these social fractures, political elites have repeatedly exploited these divides. Indeed, politics and ethnicity are recognised as being deeply entwined, with both being imbued with violence due to the bloody legacy of the previous war (Berger 2014; Le Riche 2014). Indeed, pointing out that political leaders often draw their legitimacy 'from their capacity to mobilise the population along ethnic lines' many assert that 'politics is tribal' in South Sudan (The Economist 2014). Respondents themselves equally widely noted the intimate bond between the political and the tribal, with a national staff of an INGO acknowledging that 'politics is done on tribal lines; while someone is in their government position, the benefit has to be for them and their relatives; politics is for that one's family and his tribe' (1M,NatStaff, Rumbek,Nov04). Recalling the above mentioned 'politics of exclusion', others added that 'the government rules according to their clan; the others remain behind' (2M&4F,Rumbek,Nov05).

As an expression of the explosiveness of this, full-scale armed conflict re-erupted in December 2013. And as in CAR, international commentators were quick to frame this new crisis as political, tying it to an alleged 'coup attempt' by former vice-President Machar aimed at toppling President Kiir's government (BBC 2013; Reuters 2013; VoA 2014). However, pointing to pervasive 'militarization and ethnicization of public life' as factors perpetuating violence (2014, p.2), an African Union Commission of Inquiry emphasized the manipulation of 'ethnic animosity arising out of historical grievances' as a critical factor fuelling this new crisis (Ibid, p.3; see also Amnesty International 2014b, p.15).

Indeed, going beyond the failure of the Government and opposition forces to protect civilians (UNMISS 2014, p.9), this crisis epitomised one of the biggest challenges to the global protection vision in that it was characterised by these authorities leading the

perpetration of violence against precisely those individuals they are mandated to protect. Despite being cast as the central protection actor, the state all too often emerges as ‘the most problematic offender’ (Vincent 2010, p.5), being the critical source of threat and violence (Buzan 1991, p.35; Fierke 2007, p.44; Kaldor 2003, pp.120–136; Pupavac 2005a, p.55). Even the UN Security Council agreed that in the case of the South Sudan crisis, most of the violence was caused by ‘the country’s political and military leaders’ (2014e, p.1).

Indeed, the on-set of the crisis saw national authorities and indeed the national army split along internal divisions and turn their guns on each other and the civilian population more broadly.²⁶ This then sparked a spate of violence that entailed ‘ethnic targeting, communal mobilisation and spiralling violence [that] quickly led to appalling levels of brutality against civilians, including deliberate killings inside churches and hospitals’ (ICG 2014a, p.i; see also: UNMISS 2014, p.2; UNSG 2014a, p.4). HRW added that ‘targeted killings of civilians and mass pillage and destruction of civilian property lie at the heart of how parties to this conflict are fighting this war’ (HRW 2014, p.1).²⁷

Indeed, it was widely alleged that ‘both parties to the conflict have been responsible for ethnically targeted attacks on civilians’ (UNSG 2014b, p.7; see also: FIDH 2014b, p.5; OHCHR 2015, p.1). Countless respondents corroborated this. Given the dynamics of the conflict and the geographic areas I was able to access during the actual conflict, the majority of the research participants were of the Nuer tribe, presumed to be sympathetic to the so-called ‘Opposition’, equally assumed to be targeted by the Government troops. In the state that is considered to be the stronghold of the Opposition, a young man who had been working as a school teacher stated that ‘the government forces are killing people’. I found him displaced in a deeply rural area that had been attacked multiple times by government forces. He explained that when the Government troops occupied his town ‘whether you had a gun or if you are a man or a woman or a child; there was no difference; if you appeared, you could be killed’ (1M,schoolTeacher; Leer,Oct24). A woman who had fled on foot from the state capital to the same rural area in

²⁶ Many analysts noted that ‘the SPLM and its army (SPLA) quickly split along divisions largely unaddressed from the independence war’ (ICG 2014a, p.i; see also: HRW 2014d, p.5 Jok 2014, p.15).

²⁷ Although accurate statistics are notoriously difficult to ascertain in such contexts, some four months into the crisis, the ICG reported that ‘continuing fighting has displaced more than 1,000,000 and killed over 10,000 while a humanitarian crisis threatens many more’ (ICG 2014a, p.i). UNMISS similarly reported that ‘the number of civilian casualties is high, likely in the thousands, although to date no one has been able to establish an exact figure’ (2014, p.17; see also: UNSG 2014b, p.7). Amnesty International adds that ‘tens of thousands of people – many of them civilians– were killed and 1.8 million forced to flee their homes’ (2015, p.8; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.11). These numbers continued to rise as the crisis was prolonged.

search of safety, agreed that ‘woman or man; children even; they don’t mind; they can kill them all’. As one of few women in these rural areas who can speak English, she was able to directly relay her experiences and observations, underlining that ‘we saw them raping and killing; they were burning anywhere’ (1F,good-comsEnglish,Leer,Oct25).

Systematic targeting of civilians by all parties to the conflict pulled what may well have originally been political violence, deeply into the private sphere. However, arguing that ‘this crisis is not political’ a community representative who had been forced to seek protection in one of the Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites that had been spontaneously established on various UN Mission compounds in order to provide shelter for the thousands of individuals who faced mortal violent threats was adamant that ‘they can give no political reason for killing people’ (1M,com-rep,PoC-Juba,Oct30).

However, reflecting Nordstrom’s claim that ‘precisely because violence is embodied, it is profoundly personal’ (2002, p.276; see also: Marriage 2013, p.61), as targeted communities sought to make sense of the continuing violence, it was increasingly interpreted as personal, being understood in social and ethnic terms as opposed to political. Indeed, with external analysts noting that the large-scale ‘gruesome massacre of Nuer’ at the out-set of the crisis emerged as ‘a defining event in the conflict’ (HRW 2014d, p.2; see also: UNSG 2014b, p.7), Nuer respondents widely agreed that ‘many Nuer were killed only because of their tribal background’ (7M,Youth-near comp,Leer,Oct24).

Having been forced to flee multiple attacks, a young man who had been working in a bank in the state capital prior to the crisis and was now serving as my translator, explained that ‘at first people thought this was just a problem among the politics; but now we see that innocent people are being killed; now we think it is about tribalism’ (1M,trans; Ganyiel,Nov07). Indeed, Amnesty International agreed, noting that initially ‘both parties [to the conflict] appeared to use ethnicity as an indicator of political allegiance, but as the conflict spread and reprisal killings continued, ethnicity seemed to supersede politics as the primary motivation for killing’ (2014b, p.11).

In reality, interpretations of who was killing whom, for what reasons quickly become quite fluid at the micro level, with my translator from above, who described having fled his home under intensive government shelling, explained that ‘the problem started as politics, but tribalism is in peoples’ heart; the interests are tribal; so the violence came out as tribal’ (1M,trans;Ganyiel,Nov07). This speaks the role of a permanent population, the final component part of the state.

1.3.1.5 A Permanent Population

Being ironically largely invisible in the global protection vision, the population – those who are ultimately to be protected – is largely assumed to be a monolithic, passive recipient of the protection provided by the socialized state. This is grounded in the macro perception of the state, as per the Montevideo Convention which identifies the ‘permanent population’ as a component piece of any state, assumed to correspond with the defined territory and be in relationship with the government, as discussed above.²⁸ While many suggest that this nation is ‘consciously invented’ (Opello & Rosow 2004, p.192; see also: Migdal 2001, p.13), Buzan rather suggests that while the ‘idea of the state’ binds people to their state, being constructed by those who populate that state, it also ‘binds the people into a socio-political and territorial entity’ (1991, p.70).

Indeed, shadows of this were evident in South Sudan when the population consolidated around the common goal of self-determination. This drew what had become deeply divided ethnic and political communities together to vote for independence (ICG 2011a, p.i), with a degree of social cohesion and a nascent sense of nationhood being constructed around the ‘pride in becoming an independent nation and the shared experience of struggling for liberation’ (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.27). Respondents further noted that the previous focus on the North as a common enemy had given the South a certain coherence which has since been lost, explaining that ‘when we were fighting the North we were together; we were working together as rebels’ (1M&2F,english,Ganyliel,Nov 12); ‘before, when we had a common enemy we never used to kill ourselves’ (1M,trans, Rumbek,Nov04).

However, while Marshed argues that ‘the functions of the state are important in maintaining the cohesiveness of society’ (2012, p.60), as indicated above, the political elite have done quite the opposite. As such, South Sudan is widely recognised as ‘a politically contested space, with no unified Southern Sudanese identity’ (Branch & Mampilly 2005, p.4; see also: Reeve 2012, pp.31).

Social fractures established at least during the former civil war have been hardened in the recent years, with a group of local officials who were in hiding in a rural area that had been repeatedly attacked by government troops explaining that ‘today any political dispute will quickly be between the Dinka and the Nuer because we have our own fighting issues that have been there since our grandfathers’ (4M,Administration,Ganyliel, Nov10). Ethnic divisions are widely seen as critical drivers of the most recent crisis (HRW

²⁸ In political terms, while political representation is often assumed, so too is ‘the unlimited and unwavering support of the population for the political actor who claims to represent it’ (Kalyvas 2006, p.10).

2014d, p.2; Jok 2014, p.1), with the splitting of the SPLM and SPLA as the national army along ethnic divisions that have remained 'largely unaddressed from the independence war' (ICG 2014a, p.i; see also: HRW 2014d, p.5 Jok 2014, p.15) reflecting this.

Further, with the African Union underlining the role of old rivals from the previous civil war again being deadlocked in current-day power struggles (AUCSS, 2014, p.3), many analysts noted the difficulties in distinguishing between the political and the ethnic drivers of the violence (ICG 2014a, p.11; AUCSS, 2014, p.3). Indeed, agreeing that 'big men can manipulate the uneducated ones' a group of well-educated young men in one of the historically most violent areas of South Sudan complained that 'it is they who have made this problem become tribal' (3M,Rumbek,Oct22). Recalling the general sense of impotence vis-à-vis the authorities, a group of local leaders in a town under imminent threat of attack similarly stated that 'this is not a problem of the citizens of South Sudan; it is a problem of leadership; we the civilians have nothing to say' (5M,local-authorities;Koch, Dec10).

Claiming that 'the problem is generated by the president', the above mentioned community representative of the Nuer seeking refuge in a Juba PoC-site stated that 'it was the military who started killing the people; the military is the same as the government' (1M, com-rep,PoC-Juba,Oct30). Indeed, as a leading Southern Sudanese academic, Jok Madut Jok agreed that the initial days of the crisis saw some soldiers going 'on a rampage, killing scores of Nuer people, innocent and culprit alike' (2014, p.18), with HRW adding that the consequent brutal violence quickly unfolded along inter-ethnic lines (2013d; ICG 2013c). In this people were quick to realise that the state protective institutions, despite being mandated to protect, posed more of a threat. It was with resigned desperation that a woman who had been forced to flee to another PoC site in the north of the country for protection observed 'it is the government that is killing us' (1F,Inside-tukal,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 23).

However, the discussion so far has concerned violence related to armed groups or unknown armed actors. Both case studies were also dramatic examples of the intimate and inter-personal hurt that typically unfolds as a result of social fracturing and creates what Kalyvas describes as a 'black box of intracommunity dynamics and individual behavior' within the context of larger armed conflict dynamics (2006, p.11). This is explored in the following section.

Civilian Engagement – Perpetuating social fractures

The failure of the state to deliver on its responsibility to protect is a breakage of the social contract which typically forces people at risk to turn to independent means of

protection. This in itself poses an even greater challenge to the concept of a coherent 'permanent population'. As Murshed says, people are forced to turn to 'informal kinship ties to fill the sovereignty gaps left behind by a declining state (2012, p.70). This pulls what is presumed to be macro level armed conflict, deeply into the micro level social spaces. Moreover, it generates a set of dynamics that in themselves risk exacerbating the macro conflict dynamics (ICG, 2014a, p.11; Murshed 2012, p.61).

In both cases, civilians participated in the broader conflict dynamics. In South Sudan, these ethnic dimensions prompted many civilians to join in attacks (Amnesty International 2014b, p.8; see also: Giffen *et al.* 2014, p.9; ICG 2015, p.18; Rolandsen *et al.* 2015, p.90; UNMISS 2014, p.23). In this light, a group of Nuer respondents who had been forced to flee from an ethnically mixed neighbourhood thus pointed at their Dinka neighbours, claiming that 'they were the ones looting our households; they pointed our houses to the government soldiers; even these Dinka civilians were killing the Nuer' (3F, IDPs-from-Bor, Ganyiel, Nov08). In this, they described their desperate flight from what had been their home with people shooting at them while they fled, reporting that two of the five children fleeing with them were killed.

In view of such stories, a Nuer woman located in Nuer dominated rural area, pointed to tribal based revenge as a driving force behind the escalating violence, explaining that 'if you are of my tribe and another one hurts you, I must take revenge; when we are of the same tribe, if you are my relative, I must fight the others; I must involve myself' (1F, rain-storm, Leer, Oct23). Reflecting this, the ICG noted that these communitarian dimensions were inevitably fuelling 'a widening circle of reprisal and revenge' (2014a, p.11) and thus complicating the broader dynamics of the armed conflict. This dimension had even more dramatic implications in the crisis in CAR.

Central African Republic

A group of men with whom I worked in CAR similarly pointed to the social dimensions of the crisis there, explaining that 'today, any problem will quickly be a problem for the community; if someone kills someone; that community will quickly revenge on that one' (3M, team, Bangui, July24). As such, although embedded within the context of the broader armed conflict, a micro level perspective reveals a dramatic diversity of violence that emerges, but has little to do with the conflict *per se*. Indeed, it often reflects a very distorted confluence of micro level issues merging with macro level processes – and as such is often best seen through the meso lens.

One fairly brutal example of this was the Séléka's use of so-called '*indicateurs*' who were described as local individuals who aided them to better target civilians. Noting that

‘most of the Séléka were foreigners’,²⁹ people explained that ‘they rely on local youth to indicate wealthy households because they can’t know them themselves’ (2M,Bureau-of-Mayor,Ndele,Mar18). These *indicateurs* were said to investigate the local population and point out those who have things worth stealing to the Séléka elements. As a woman with whom I worked in Ndele clarified, ‘they help Séléka target households for looting and revenge’ (1F,Veron,Ndele,Mar13).

The raw betrayal of such personalized targeting of violence was exemplified by a woman who reported being attacked and raped in her house by seven armed men. She explained that these attackers also stole a vehicle and a substantial amount of money which she and her husband were hiding on behalf of their church. People speculated that her compound had been pointed out to Séléka as one worth looting, with the woman herself acknowledging that ‘the youth who pointed out my household lives nearby; I now see him pass by each day’ (1F,rural-house,Bimbo,July28). Indeed, reflecting on this particular incident, the female CdQ of the same area stated that these ‘*indicateurs*’ are usually well known within the community, but added with frustration that ‘they are well protected by the Séléka’ (1F,WomanCdQ,Bimbo,July28). A CdQ from another quartier in Bangui agreed with similar frustration that ‘these ones are known by the population, but they are protected; we can do nothing against them’ (1M,CdQ,Gbafio,Aug01).

When the above woman was asked what she thought about this *indicateur*, she shrugged her shoulders helplessly. His continued presence clearly aggravated the physical pain she suffers as a result of the physical attack – as did the fact that her husband, who now refers to her as ‘the wife of Séléka’, was threatening to abandon her because of the shame her rape brought him. Moreover, literally adding insult to injury, the woman further desperately reported that ‘the church says the attack was false; they accuse us of stealing their money; but it was the armed men who took that’ (1F,Rural House,Bimbo,July28). This begins to illustrate the complexities of the violence that unfolds within the micro spaces of armed conflict. These dynamics penetrate deeply into people’s daily lives, generating diverse and complex risks and consequences.

Reflecting what Kalyvas calls the ‘identification problem’ (2006, p.89), a far wider range of opportunistic perpetrators of violence emerged in CAR. With countless respondents lamenting that ‘unknown men with guns circulate at night’ (3F,poor@base,Ndele,Mar09); ‘there are many armed men; they cause insecurity; but we don’t always know who they are’ (2F,Interesting lady&daug,Art;Ndele,Mar12), two brothers in a high risk Bangui quartier noted that ‘we don’t know if these uncontrolled elements are civilians with

²⁹ It is speculated that Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries made up as much as 80% of the Séléka troops (FIDH 2014, p.4).

weapons, or Séléka pretending to be civilians, or some others all together; we just don't know' (2M,brothers,Castor,July30).

Nevertheless, respondents underlined the fact that the chaotic environment and the collapse of the state together created the opportunistic space. As a context analyst from a national NGO in Bangui explained, 'there are many uncontrolled elements within the neighbourhood; they are taking advantage of the chaotic situation' (1M,Mathieu,Internal,Bangui,Aug02). As such, it becomes evident that the violence characterising FPZs is not confined to the warring parties (Keen 2008, p.21; see also: Marriage, 2013).

Indeed, one of the more painful realities is the pervasive intimate and inter-personal dynamics of violence which reflect what Kalyvas refers to as the 'privatization of violence' (2006, p.14). Observing that in such circumstances, ordinary people often disregard 'moral self-sanctions' and engage in activities that 'further their self-interests but injure others' (Ibid, pp.338–339), many commentators note that these local dynamics of violence are often motivated by 'opportunism, impunity, and revenge' (Kalyvas 2006, p.24; see also: Hafner-Burton 2013, p.7). Agreeing with this, a very animated group of early teenager respondents in one community who had joined me in a NGO supported community centre to reflect on their experiences of the conflict reported that 'people in the community have taken advantage of the chaotic situation' (35M&F,church-youth;Ndele,Mar12). Indeed, a Pastor who spent a good amount of time reflecting on the community's response to the on-going violence, equally observed that in the absence of the mechanisms that normally constrain individual behaviour, 'some people take the opportunity in this situation to do bad things' (1M,Pastor-Epostolique,Ndele,Mar11).

This adds yet another dimension to this 'privatization of violence' which enables individuals and communities to settle private issues and local contestations that typically have nothing to do with the broader conflict (Kalyvas 2006, p.365; Nordstrom 2004, p.78). As, a young woman with whom I worked in Bangui explained, 'now people are taking the opportunity to revenge; people are settling old scores' (1F,Sandrine,Bangui,July24). This also tapped into some of the more extreme dysfunctions of the Séléka as the *de facto* state authorities.

For example, the CdQ who had been badly beaten by the Séléka equally complained that with their lack of discipline, Séléka elements were regularly drawn into addressing personal vendettas, explaining that 'now people report cases as a means of vengeance' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11). Indeed, Kalyvas notes that while local denunciations are common in such circumstances, they are often both malicious and false (2006, pp.338–339). In this line, a local staff member of an INGO similarly explained that

'now people can accuse the other as he wants; you can easily just accuse someone to the Séléka; they will take that person into custody, beat him, charge him a big fine and leave him in jail for some time; this makes the accuser a big man; you have to be afraid of him after that; we have no justice here' (1F,DRC-NatStaff,Ndele,Mar11).

With one woman explaining more generally that 'these Séléka are now responding to private issues with their guns; now they are acting on vengeance for their families; they want to revenge anything done against their brothers' (1F,Veron,Ndele,Mar13), the multiple channels through which the macro level conflict is pulled directly into micro level disputes become ever more visible. A group of women who were living together in a large house that have been badly damaged due to repeated attacks by the Séléka explained that 'if people want to cause problems for their neighbours; they can do this with the Séléka; they can call on them to menace others' (3F@big house,Kitigba,Aug05).

Another macro and micro confluence generated a very particular dynamic of violence that concerned former police and tribunal personnel, who faced revenge attacks for past judgements. For example, a group of Muslim observers reported that 'those ones who had to pay fines in the past are now telling Séléka to target the judges' (Muslim-Focus-Group,Bangui,July23). A CdQ similarly reported the killing of a judge in his quartier for exactly these reasons, shaking his head while he explained that 'a man that this judge had convicted called in the Séléka; they agreed to finish him' (1F,CdQ,Gobongo,Aug01).

Indeed, local interpretations of these dynamics demonstrate how the civilian and the combatant are progressively merged together in the local imagination. For example, while arguing that 'those associated with Séléka can call on them to address old resentments', a group of Christians specifically emphasised that 'now if you have a disagreement with a Muslim, they will report you to Séléka; then you will have a serious problem' (Christian-Focus-Group,DRC@off,July23). Because the Séléka were perceived as being Muslim, non-Muslims reflexively merged the Muslim community and the Séléka together as one. Being quick to conclude that 'when you are Muslim, you are with the Séléka', non-Muslim respondents claimed that 'when you are Muslim you can revenge old problems with people in the community; if you are not part of that group, you must be afraid of this' (1M,DRCed,Ndele,Mar09).

This emergent social fissure became ever more evident throughout the first year of the Séléka crisis, eventually sparking a whole new dimension to the conflict crisis. Given that the Séléka violence, which persisted for more than a year, was largely civilian targeted, those on the receiving end took their losses extremely personally. Eventually, as Amnesty International explained, 'the lawless and abusive nature of [Séléka's] rule gave

rise to unprecedented sectarian violence and hatred' (2014a, p.5), fuelling a dramatic second phase of violence that consisted largely of extremely deadly civilian-on-civilian violence which led to the conflict being at least nominally reframed along religious lines.

This demonstrates how when the state fails to uphold law and order and provide the basics of protection, people within that society themselves often resort to violence, whether as predation or as protection (Keen 1998, p.38; Goldstein 2007, p.51). Contributing to an overall Hobbesian context, this micro level violence is then pulled back into the broader conflict, directly amplifying the risk of ever more complex civil war (Murshed 2012, p.61).³⁰

1.4 Conclusions

People living in FPZs face some of the most dire protection circumstances. If there was any way to prevent that or reverse it, it should be done. Global protection norms embody the aspirational promise to do so, but aspirations do not match the urgency of the need. While advancing norms articulate civilized standards of conduct of the state and their governments many scholars argue that the legitimacy of a state is intimately linked to the level of protection it affords to its citizens (Kaldor 2003, p.136; Orend 2002, p.20; Pupavac 2005a, p.55; Tickner 1992, p.69). However, the extent to which protection has remained a global level process is evidenced in claims by UNSG Ban Ki-Moon, that the fact that member states are increasingly accepting international norms has 'led to important human protection advances' (2011; see also: UNSG 2009b, p.11). This chapter has demonstrated that assumptions that signing international treaties equates with improved protection are deeply suspect in FPZs.

Hidden within this broad assumption is the fact that the actual process of translating global norms into a concrete impact in the lives of people at risk in FPZs is largely unproblematic. Much of this process is relegated to the realm of reflexive assumption. At the heart of these assumptions, is the 'ideal state'. State institutions are assumed to be in place, serving as the conduits through which globally articulated protection norms are transmitted into the local spaces and individuals' lives. However, this chapter reveals that nearly every dimension of the state in FPZs is problematic. Not only does its aberrant institutional expression fail to provide protection for individuals at risk, its loss of a presumed monopoly on the legitimate use of violence creates the space for multiple actors to engage in the perpetration of violence, including the state itself.

³⁰ This is explored extensively in chapter 7.

A meso level analysis spotlights the complex interface between FPZs which are characterized both by essentially non-existent state protective capacity and perpetual violence, and the global protection vision which is constructed on reflexive assumptions of state capacity to protect, with the socialization effort being designed to stimulate the necessary will to do so. This lens also reveals some serious protection distortions when the macro vision is nevertheless imposed upon the micro space – as seen when the Séléka, as primary perpetrators in the micro space was reframed as primary ‘protector’ by the global norm entrepreneurs.

As such, this chapter raises some fundamental questions about the foundation upon which the global protection vision is constructed. In this it returns us to the pressing question of how to translate aspirational ideational global protection norms into a concrete impact. Norm entrepreneurs have also allegedly focused on this question, with Ban Ki-moon acknowledging ‘the need to operationalize a concept of human protection’ (2011). OHCHR has equally called for greater efforts to ‘bridge the gap between the lofty rhetoric of human rights in the halls of the United Nations’ and the realities on ground (2005, p.5; see also Ogata & Sen 2003, p.26). The following chapter sketches the global protection regime that has emerged in response.

Chapter 2 : The Global Protection Regime

'Now it is for the foreigner to rescue the situation'
(3M, near-Afex, Rumbek, Sept26).

2.1 Introduction

"Fragile protection zones" pose some of the greatest challenges to the global protection regime. In sketching some of the complex dynamics of violence that characterise these zones, the previous chapter has underlined the fact that rather than being the exception, protection emergencies are the rule in such contexts. It illustrates the extent to which the presumed state-centric protection mechanisms – which are expected to provide a buffer between these perpetual threats and the people at risk – fail to manifest in some of the harshest protection crises in the world.

As such, rather than being convinced of the ideational globally articulated protection vision, the notion of protection within FPZs reflected a complex relationship between the associated ideas of 'security', 'peace', 'safety', and 'human rights', terms which respondents used relatively interchangeably with that of 'protection'. The actual discourse varied according to a range of factors, including the acuity of the protection threats and what people imagined to be feasible. For example, in those locations where NGOs had been doing human rights dissemination, the target population sometimes used this terminology – albeit, tentatively, remaining largely unconvinced of the feasibility of an all-encompassing promise of good things (as discussed in later chapters). Especially in the more acute circumstances, people at risk simply cannot afford to rely on aspirational ideals. They thus tended to drop 'human rights' language (unless directly asked about it), in favour of the more urgent notion of 'protection',³¹ referring the more fundamental idea of being shielded or guarded from imminent threat. In the most overtly violent contexts people preferentially used the term 'peace' indicating that the absence of violence was seen to be a pre-requisite to protection.³²

Further, recalling that the notion of protection refers to a status; to an action; and to the person or thing that protects, it is unsurprising that while the global protection vision spotlights the state as the protector, people at risk rather focused on the end result of being protected, regardless of who does it or how. Indeed, being quick to recognise the infeasibility of the state providing any form of shield or guard, people in both cases put little

³¹ This is again significantly influenced by NGO discourse as well.

³² This is explored further in chapter four.

merit in that vision of protection and were rather quick to shift their emphasis elsewhere, with many calling upon the international community.

For example, in describing the unresponsiveness local government officials, a woman in South Sudan who had received some human rights training from an NGO explained that 'we think of the foreigner if they are around; they understand better; we get more help from them'. Tying it to the corruption alluded to earlier, she added that 'if you have no relatives in the government, you will get no help unless the foreigner is around' (1F,working,Pariang,Aug 13). The group of men and women who were discussing such issues on a Sunday afternoon after a church service, framed the problem more in relation to the nascency of the state, claiming that 'we are a new nation, we have no leadership; we don't know how to build our nation; we lack information, we need others from the outside to tell us how to do it' (post-church group,Bor,Oct07). The large group of people from Kapoeta who in the previous chapter explained that they do not look to their government for anything suggested that 'the only solution is for the foreigner to intervene; we have been depending on the foreigner up to now, so we must continue' (25M&F, civilians,Kapoeta,Aug25).

Another man who had clearly spent quite some time reflecting on potential solutions alluded to the cultural logic underpinning this when he stated that 'if someone like the foreigner can come with an idea of peace, that would be good, because there is no way we can avoid all the clashes among ourselves' (1M,Man,Bor,Oct05). Taking this further, the church group above explained that 'when two people are fighting, it is for a third party like the older brother to come in to find a solution; we think of the US like our big brother; they must come in and tell us how to live in harmony; we can also do the same for them when they have their own problems; without them, we'd still be fighting; they are like a closer brother that can solve our problems' (post-church-group,Bor,Oct07).

This of course was also intimately tied to their experiences from the previous civil war, with a group of Elders who constituted a Special Traditional Court in a particularly violent area of the country claimed that 'when we were fighting [with Khartoum], it was the whites who gave us our rights and now we need your help again' (5M,SpecialCourt,Rumbek,Sept25). Another group of Traditional Leaders who had gathered in the same village from the surrounding areas to address inter-communal tensions agreed that 'the foreigners solved the problems with the North; now they must also advise on how to solve the problems we have amongst ourselves; they can advise the government to stop this conflict' (12M,TraditionalLeaders,Rumbek,Sept24).

These interpretations shed a different light on the conclusions of the church group that 'it is either for the foreigner, the international community, or God [to find solutions]; there is nothing that the individual can do' (post-church-group,Bor,Oct07). Indeed, there were repeated calls for the 'foreigner' to help. Three elderly men who described a sense of extreme helplessness vis-a-vis their dire circumstances, stressed that 'now it is for the foreigner to rescue the situation' (3M, old-menAfex,Rumbek,Sept26). The above group from Kapoeta were sure that I as the foreigner 'will find the solution' (25M&F,civilians Kapoeta,Aug25). Similarly, a group of women who had recently returned to their rural village after having been displaced in Khartoum during the previous war agreed that 'someone like you is responsible for solving our problems' (2F,returnee-women,Rumbek, Sept21).

Alternatively, when people in the LRA affected area in CAR were asked who they think is responsible to help them with the problems they are facing, many expressed a significant degree of confusion. For example, a *Chef de Village* (CdV) who had been forced to flee his home due to LRA attacks some two years earlier stated that 'now we don't know who can assure our protection and our lives' (1M,CdV,SiteB,Zemio,Dec24). Recalling the incapacity of the state institutions while noting that 'we live with no protection; we have no rights' one particularly despondent individual who had been forced to flee his home many times underlined that 'there is no intervention to save us', concluding that 'we don't know who to blame for this' (1M,IDPnative,SiteC,Zemio,Jan10). Some expressed this with anger, with an elder Pastor who had also been displaced saying that 'we don't know who is responsible for us, but we are not satisfied; no one has taken charge of us' (1M, ElderPastor-IDPs,Zemio,Dec28).

Indeed, recalling the sense of abandonment mentioned in the previous chapter, many people were doubtful that anyone could help, stating that 'no one can take the responsibilities for our protection; we don't know anyone who can take such responsibilities; no one ever can do so' (1F,hunter-family,Zemio,Dec24). A woman who played an important leadership role for women within her displaced community agreed that 'no one can take responsibility for us' (1F, Catherine,IDPsZemio,Dec28). Reflecting a similar sense of despair, another small group of displaced women from another site added that 'we don't know who is responsible; we can only pray to God' (3F,Site-C,Zemio,Jan09).

When the even more visible collapse of the state occurred with the Séléka crisis, these concerns were compounded. With a CdQ from one of the first villages to be occupied by the Séléka pointing out that 'everyone is demoralized; we have lost hope' (1M,CdQ,Runga,Kabo,Feb07), a Muslim man from the same village again concluded that

‘no one can be responsible’ (1M,Muslim Arab-Husband-trader,Kabo,Feb14). As the crisis progressed, a very colourful elder man serving as a CdQ in Bangui similarly agreed that ‘we have no one who can do anything for us now’ (1M,CdQ, tracksuit,Fouh6,Aug02). It was in this light that people turned their hopes, even if unconvinced, to the international community.

As opposed to the US in South Sudan, the focus in CAR was on France as their former colonizer. Even during the earliest stages of the Séléka crisis, individuals from the northern villages first to be occupied indicated that ‘we wait for France to intervene; but they will leave us to die here’ (3M,CdQChristians,Ndele,Mar13). Asking ‘where are our colonizers’ a Baptiste Pastor and his wife from the same village argued along with many that ‘they should be here to protect the population that is now suffering’ (1M&1F,Baptiste Pastor-on-hill,Ndele,Mar15). With many in Bangui similarly asking ‘where are the French?’, an elderly man captured the thoughts of many when asserting that ‘the French know what they have to do; it is their responsibility to help us now’ (1M,Old-man,Galabajia,July23). A CdQ of a quartier in which the Séléka had set up a large base agreed that ‘France must take up their responsibility’ (1M,CdQ,Gbafio,Aug01).

Indeed, the logic of this was very similar to big-brother notion in South Sudan, although in CAR this was rather framed as ‘parents’. As such, the colourful CdQ from above stated that ‘our parents have abandoned us; we don’t know what will happen without their help’ (1M,CdQ, tracksuit,Fouh6,Aug02). Similarly, the CdQ from neighbouring quartier asserted that ‘they are our parents; they must come and help us; they must resume their responsibility; they must come and eradicate these problems; they must restore peace; (1M,CdG,Galabajia,July23).

Thus, while people at risk desperately reached for any potential protective option, the global protection regime has acknowledged responsibility for failures of the protection vision that is fundamentally constructed on the ‘ideal state’. This is at the root of Ban Ki-moon’s realisation of the need to better ‘operationalize a concept of human protection’ (2011). However, with many agreeing that there is no one ‘true’ way of achieving this (Orend 2002, pp.69–70), the past few decades have seen the progressive consolidation of a complex and multi-dimensional global protection regime that has emerged in efforts to tackle this translation gap.³³ The next section sketches this regime. The final sections of this chapter then present the research methodology used in this project, and provide an outline of the structure of this thesis.

³³ Bellamy has recently referred to this as the International Human Protection Regime (2016).

2.2 The Protection Regime

In defining a regime as ‘sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors expectations converge’ (1983, p.2), Krasner emphasizes that a regime functions on many dimensions. While the foundation of the global protection regime is the ideational principles and norms discussed in the previous chapter, this section outlines the conceptual shifts and operational innovations that have emerged as the complex blocks that have progressively constructed the global protection regime in efforts to tackle the challenge of translating these ideational norms into a concrete impact.

Being widely considered as having kicked off this push for new standards of conduct for states in terms of protection, the UDHR represents a foundational moment in norm diffusion. However, as mentioned, far more dramatic normative evolution has been seen since the end of the Cold War (Bellamy 2016, p.113; Hopgood 2013, p.4; Steiner & Alston 2000, p.v). This evolution has also been accompanied with important conceptual shifts that fundamentally altered the understanding of protection action.

One such shift emerged through security studies in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Long-standing realist traditions, which framed the notion of security as a geo-political issue and positioned the state as the analytic referent object, came under challenge, with the *individual* gradually displacing the *state* as the ‘irreducible basic unit’ in security concerns (Buzan 1991, p.35; see also: Buzan *et al.* 1998, p.36; Buzan & Hansen 2009, p.11; Fierke 2007, p.45; Tickner 1992, p.53). As opposed to protection of the state and its territory being the end objective of security, the state was being reimagined as the *means* to ensuring the protection of the *individual*.

This saw the notion of security re-conceived by some as so-called *human security*, which in effect redefined security as protection of ‘the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment’ (Ogata & Sen 2003, p.4; see also: UNDP 1994).³⁴ Moreover, with some arguing that there is significant overlap between the notions of human security and human rights (Buzan 2004, p.369; Mahony 2006, p.3), this focus on the individual also fostered a resurgence of human rights discourse in this post-Cold War period, which while being explicitly individual-centric, also clearly identifies the state as the ‘protector’ (Fierke 2007, p.45).

While the promise embodied within both notions is essentially all-encompassing, the means to operationalising this promise focused on governing the relationship between

³⁴ UNDP human security experts define security as ‘safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities’ (1994, p.23).

the individual and the State (OHCHR & CESR 2013, p.11). Taking this further, both were seen by many scholars as systems for empowering the individual (Ignatieff 2001, p.18; Moravcsik 2000, p.217; Pupavac 2005a, p.55; Robinson 1998, p.46), facilitating them 'to claim their rights' vis-à-vis the state as the duty-bearer (OHCHR 2005, p.2; The Sphere Project 2011, p.30; Rand et al. 2008, p.7). In this, the position of the state was irrefutably consolidated as 'the primary agent for alleviating insecurity' (Buzan 1991, p.35; see also: Ghani *et al.* 2005, p.4; Mehler 2012, p.52), thus consolidating its position at the heart of the protection vision and re-enforcing the paradox of the indispensability of an entity that had already proven its unreliability. With Hafner-Burton pointing out that the field of human rights is 'one of the most heavily legalized areas of international relations' (2013, p.7), this was especially so in the conception of protection as law.

2.2.1 Protection as Law

With Keen noting a widely held assumption 'that 'the rule of law' is at the opposite end of the spectrum from lawless violence' (2000, p.9), many see protection in acute crises primarily as a legal venture. For example, equating protection with 'ensuring respect for human rights in concrete ways for individuals' (2005, p.12), OHCHR asserts that operationally 'human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law' (2013c). Tying protection in armed conflict directly to international humanitarian law (IHL), the ICRC equally agrees that '[a]ny protection activity is based on the concept of the rule of law' (2007b; see also: ICRC 2009a, p.4).

With Hafner-Burton noting that the most apparent response to protection issues 'has been efforts to create and spread norms through a growing system of international laws and procedures' (2013, p.8), Ban Ki-moon specifically applauds the 'unprecedented progress in international law, humanitarian law and the establishment of international legal institutions' during the past decade (2011; see also: Smith 2005, p.1).

However, this takes Donnelly's statement that the 'centrality of states' in the international protection regime is obvious (1999, p.85) to an even deeper level. Indeed, founded on the myth of the state and its institutional capacity to protect, the legalised vision proffers a further, equally pervasive myth which says that 'rights, once established in law, *exist*' (Speed 2007, p.171). This model thus asserts that the central means of translating global norms into the local space is through their codification into law – and implicitly the state institutions designed to uphold these laws. While States are seen to 'monopolize most of the effective means by which rights can be made real' (Owen 2003, p.24), a circular logic emerges.

Building on assertions that ‘the primary function of government is to protect these rights’ (Brown 1999, p.104), the architects of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ doctrine for example, claim that ‘the key to the effective observance of human rights remains, as it always has been, national law and practice’ (ICISS 2001, p.14) – which is a statement of the state’s institutional capacity in itself.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the global protection vision presumes the institutional framework and thus the *capacity* of the state to protect. It thus focuses on prompting the political *will* to do so. On this basis, global level protection efforts consist largely of norm entrepreneurs repeatedly re-asserting that the state does indeed bear the primary duty to protect. As UNSG, Ban Ki-moon regularly reminds us that the state as ‘the institution with highest responsibility’ bears the obligation ‘to ensure protection of human beings’ (2011). OHCHR regularly echoes that ‘it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms’ (2013b). With its claim that ‘States have the *primary* legal responsibility for protection’ (Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.2) the Humanitarian Policy Group, as an important sector think-tank, also indicates the extent to which this state-centric mantra is a touch-stone for operational humanitarian protection actors as well.

However, while the realization of global protection norms is seen by many as inextricably linked to the state (Colas 2005, p.32; Merry 2005, p.223), this global vision is constructed on assumptions of how the politics of protection *should* work, while largely ignoring the on ground realities that characterize FPZs. These reiterations of legal obligations to protect presume the functional capacity of formal judicial and law enforcement institutions.

These disconnects are obscured to some extent due to the invisibility of the individual within the macro perspective. Although the human security and human rights suggest that the individual is the final referent object, there is no denying that macro level preferential engagement with the state. In the absence of insights into the individual experience, the idea of protection is reduced to a generic public good to be achieved for the collective. Thus, while the fact that states can no longer simply dismiss accusations of human rights violations as interference in their domestic affairs is attributed to this wide dissemination of ‘advancing norms’ (Arbour 2008, p.457; Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; Falk 2005, p.75; Hafner-Burton & Tsutsui 2005, p.1385; Hawkins 2002, p.70; Landman 2005, p.3; Risse & Ropp 1999), the individual, especially those living the ‘worsening realities’ are marginalised.

Indeed, the pressure to make the global protection vision truly actionable is obscured by claims that these socialization efforts have contributed to an important global cultural achievement (Donnelly 2002, pp.10–16; Douzinas 2000, p.10; Dundes Renteln 1988, p.343; Freeman 2002, p.5). Recalling the distinction drawn earlier between that of changing attitudes and beliefs as an end in itself versus ensuring a concrete impact, appreciation for the former has effectively undermined the urgency to ensure the latter, especially in FPZs.

With scholars making the point that these ‘advancing norms’ are meant to protect the dignity and integrity of individuals at risk by protecting them against outrages, injury and death (Brysk cited in Goodale 2007a, p.6; Ingram 2008, p.401; Merry 2007a, p.42; Provost 2005, p.1), the urgency of the protection threats that characterise FPZs underline the need to aspire to more than a cultural impact. However, unable to step outside of the state-centric quagmire, many agree that this ‘ultimately depends on effective institutions’ (OHCHR 2005, p.9; see also: Brown 1999, p.106; Ignatieff 2003, p.65; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.3). Efforts to translate protection as law again compounds the contradiction of ‘pledging trust in an entity that is notorious for its unworthiness’ (Gould 2005, p.65).

From this view, many agree that there are many examples where ‘rights established in law are functionally non-existent precisely because the state refuses to enforce them’ (Speed 2007, p. 187; see also Goodale 2007a, p.7; Ignatieff 2001, pp.18–21; Wilson 2007, p.351). Despite an ever-advancing legal system, even the most basic rights are often not actually protected (Orend 2002, p.26).

But this gap between laws and their application is of course no surprise, especially for actors who straddle the normative and operational perspective. For example, while stressing that existing IHL is adequate for most circumstances encountered in armed conflict, the ICRC has systematically emphasized that ‘[i]t is *respect* for the law that is lacking’ (2013a, emphasis added). The Security Council itself has long noted ‘the widening gap between the rules of international humanitarian law and their application’ (1999, p.2). Describing this as a ‘fundamental tension’ in the international legal system, Hafner-Burton concludes that law is ‘almost powerless to put its own aspirations into practice’ (2013, p.xvi).

This all too starkly recalls earlier-made observations that the concrete impact of globally articulated norms has long been ‘quite underwhelming’ (Robinson 1998, p. 46). Indeed, Hafner-Burton and Ron have stated more recently that the project simply promises more than it can deliver (2009, pp.392–393). With Hafner-Burton *et al.* going so far as to suggest that the human rights project is ‘an implementation failure’ (2008, p.137), even

Goodale has had to agree that the practical dimension of the project has proven to be more complicated than originally imagined (2007a, p.4; see also: Ingram 2008, p.401). As such a multitude of reformulations have unfolded in recent decades, both on the macro political level, and the operational level.

2.2.1.1 Constructing the Worthy Victim

One element has been the construction of the ‘worthy victim’ (Warren 2007, p.263; See also: Jeffery & Candeia 2006, p.290). Quite the opposite to seeing them as empowered in these acute crises, people at risk are increasingly framed as ‘victims’ of human rights abuses (Warren 2007, p.263; see also: Bar-tal 2009, p.232; Meredith 2009, p.260). This is particularly rooted in human rights law, which through enabling at least some people to claim the ‘privileged right to victimhood’, has ‘formalised’ and ‘legitimised’ victimhood (Loytomaki 2012, p.1). This victim has been increasingly reframed as ‘helpless, powerless, unable to make choices for themselves, and forced to endure forms of pain and suffering’ (Merry 2007b, p.195; see also: Loytomaki 2012, p.19; Warren 2007, p.263). Effectively presented as ‘a passive recipient of experience’ (Pupavac 2001, p.364; see also: Fassin & Rechtman 2009, p.xi; Scheper-Hughes 2008, p.39; Tarlo 1995, p.2921), the obvious corollary is that such victims require ‘allies or outside rescuers for protection’ (Smyth 2000, p.132; see also: Pupavac 2001, p.360).

The urgent ‘need to protect those who cannot protect themselves’ is generated (Merry 2007, p.201). It is this sentiment that pushes the international community to respond to the above calls of people at risk. It also underpins the ‘Protection of Civilians’ (PoC) operational agenda. In more political terms, the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) agenda is acclaimed as the emergent political tool designed to tackle the paradox of state indispensability and unreliability and save these ‘worthy victims’.

2.2.2 Responsibility to Protect

With globally articulated ‘advancing norms’ establishing its foundation (Arbour 2008, p.448; Cohen 2009),³⁵ R2P has emerged as the political construct that seeks to generate solutions to the repeated shortfalls of the state-centric global protection vision. Described as ‘a powerful political call’ for all states to abide by established normative obligations (GCR2P 2009, p.5), R2P is lauded as the means for ‘reconciling the principles of sovereignty and fundamental human rights in a way which could protect individuals from arbitrary killing’ (Bellamy 2009, p.2; see also: Evans 2008, p.7; Rishmawi 2009, p.87; ICISS 2001, p.xi; Weiss 2012, pp.2–4).

³⁵ Arbour underlines that the R2P doctrine largely reiterates ‘existing legal obligations’ of states (2008, p.451; see also: GCR2P 2009, p.5; UNSG 2009b, p.11).

To this end it firstly rearticulates sovereignty as responsibility (ICISS 2001, p.xi). While emphatically (re)declaring that ‘the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself’ (ICISS 2001, p.xi; see also: UN General Assembly 2005, para.138-139), the construct re-confirms the primacy of the state in the global protection vision. However, in addition, it articulates further expectations that the international community will override state sovereignty in order to take direct action ‘to rescue suffering civilians who live in a state that is unable or unwilling to protect and succor them’ (Weiss 2012, p.2; see also Global Solutions 2011, p.2). It is in this sense that R2P is described as the political construct that has ‘elevated the lives of people over those of abstractions, namely governments or states’ (Alvarez 2008, p.280; see also: Arbour 2008, p.448; Stamnes 2009, p.77).

In efforts to move beyond the indispensability of the domestic state, when a state fails to stop a protection crisis within its jurisdiction, R2P dictates that the responsibility to protect is then transferred to the international community of states (UN General Assembly 2005, para.138–139; see also: Arbour 2008, p.448; Hopgood 2013, p.5; ICISS 2001, p.xi). With Ban Ki-moon noting that the ‘chief failing’ in the global protection effort has been the reluctance of international states ‘to act in the face of serious threats’ (2012), R2P is presented as the tool to ‘rally political support’ to do so (Rishmawi 2009, p.87).

Hunt and Bellamy argue that in articulating this broader reach of responsibility, R2P provides the ‘political framework for preventing mass atrocities and protecting civilians in the most egregious cases of abuse’ (2011, p.3). As such, Bellamy adds that in taking ‘a victims’ point of view’ R2P emphasizes ‘the saving of lives over and above the rights of the interveners’ (2009, p.98). Taking this further, Evans as one of the R2P architects a strong advocate, claims that ‘the core idea’ of R2P ‘is that the perspective that matters is that of suffering human beings’ (forward in Weiss 2012, p.ix). However, being a clearly macro level construct, R2P actually has little insight into the individual lived experience. Indeed, in line with the fact that global level analysis emphasizes the political dimensions as opposed to everyday local security needs (Call 2007, p.382), it comes as no surprise that local level insecurity and threats to *human* security remain largely invisible at the macro level, and thus largely fall ‘outside of the Security Council’s view of its authority’ (Fitzsimmons 2007, p.352).

Nevertheless, R2P has re-emphasised what Fierke describes as the ‘inescapable relationship’ between politics and security (2007, p.4). Despite conceptual shifts discussed above, having historically been framed as geo-political, security issues often continue to be framed as military concerns ‘requiring coercive means’ (Cooper & Pugh 2002, p.11). As

Fierke says, these macro level realist perspectives on security 'emphasize the *means* of threatening, or the use of force by a state' (2007, p.13), being grounded in the militarized notion that 'armed force is the ultimate resolver of tensions' (Enloe 2002, p.23). R2P has played an important role in redirecting the operational translation of global protection vision in that direction. It has especially played an important role in reducing the global promise of protection to that of physical security.

2.2.3 Protection as Physical Security

R2P, with its emphasis on the so-called 'most egregious crimes' of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (UN General Assembly 2005, para.139), perpetuates this reductionist interpretation of the idea of protection. To some degree, it reflects the fact that rights to personal security are also some of the most extensively codified rights (Malešević 2010, p.10; Orend 2002, p.26). Indeed, commentators have more broadly pointed to the emergent trend of the protection of 'physical integrity rights' progressively gaining primacy (de Rover 1999; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.1; Luck 2009, p.33; Sikkink 2011, pp.16–17).

Nevertheless, looking beyond protection as law, protection as physical security sits on an equally questionable foundation. While the myth that once codified in law, rights exist underpins the notion of protection as law; protection as physical security is constructed on the equally mythical assumption that there is a direct relationship between the threat or use of force and the end result of protection (Fierke 2007, p.13). In a systematic failure to 'decouple' security from the use of force (Ibid, p.44), some commentators have argued for even more use of force as a means of achieving civilian protection, with Weiss for example, claiming that we have seen 'too little armed force to protect human beings' during the past decade (2012, p.13; see also: Williams & Stewart 2008, pp.100–101). As such, although some of its proponents argue otherwise (Evans 2008, p.57), R2P has been tied directly into this logic of force, with international military responses being quickly identified as *the* critical aspect of the R2P construct (Stamnes 2009, p.81; Weir 2009, p.6). Despite the dubious correlation, the notion of civilian protection is nevertheless now intimately associated with direct military action (Holt *et al.* 2010, p.200; Mansson 2008, p.580).

This is particularly constructed on the idea of saving the 'worthy victim', who as a passive and helpless victim is seen as 'deserving of sympathy, support, outside help, and intervention by others to vanquish the victimiser' (Smyth 2000, p.132). And the use of force is the preferred means, with de Waal noting in 2007 that 'R2P seems to promise a new world order in which international military forces are used to protect civilians at risk'

(2007a). Weiss more recently described the 'routine use of military force to protect human beings trapped in the throes of war' as a 'remarkable development in the post-Cold War era' (2012, p.1). This logic fostered the rise of the 'Protection of Civilians' (PoC) agenda within peacekeeping.

2.2.4 Protection of Civilians

Today, many commentators agree that the PoC activities of UN peacekeepers are an 'explicit interpretation of R2P' (Nasu 2011, p.365; see also: Bellamy 2009, p.133; Evans 2008, pp.121-123; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.1; UNSG 2013f; Weiss 2012, p.10). As such, the international community now systematically looks to these peacekeepers to ensure physical protection in FPZs (Breau 2006, p.429; Holt & Berkman 2006, p.2; Weir 2009, p.1).³⁶

However, in line with suggestions by some that the intensive debate over R2P has 'overestimated' its impact (Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.5), the militaristic efforts of armed peacekeepers mandated to protect civilians in FPZs have regularly delivered a negligible protective impact vis-à-vis the magnitude of the task (as explored in chapter four). Peacekeeping as a top-down militaristic approach to protection fails to sidestep the central conundrum of physical security being a state-centric venture relying upon functional local institutions. It proves to be an inadequate substitute means through which global protection norms are translated into a concrete protective impact in the micro spaces of FPZs.

Such failures are said to be the driving force behind Ban Ki-moon's 'Rights up Front' (RuF) initiative which allegedly seeks to focus the UN as an institution more explicitly on the challenge of translating 'advancing norms' into effective protective impact. Emerging in direct response to the UN's continued failures to deliver on commitments to protect against human rights violations (Gilmour 2014, p.239; Petrie 2012, p.28), the RuF is said to reflect the UN's intent to make 'a very serious effort to react more systematically when we see human rights violations that could risk turning into mass atrocities' (Deputy UNSG 2013). Described as an effort to renew the UN's 'faith in fundamental human rights' (UNSG 2013f), it is designed to re-inject the human rights dimension into the work of the UN (Deputy UNSG 2013; see also: Gilmour 2014, p.246; UN General Assembly 2013, p.2). However for others, answers are sought outside the formal state-centric institutions.

³⁶ The UN Security Council has increasingly been making the 'protection of civilians' explicit in peacekeeping mandates since 1999.

2.2.5 Protection by Non-State Actors

As discussed in the previous chapter, non-state actors are widely recognised as animating the ‘transnational network’ which is central to the norm diffusion model and the process of socialising states into so-called appropriate behaviour that ensures the protection of their citizens. While that model positions these actors in the global realm, playing a largely catalytic role aimed at prompting states to more fully assume their protection responsibilities (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Keck & Sikkink 1998), as *moral entrepreneurs* and *norm entrepreneurs*, they are often more fundamentally recognised as the ‘conscience’ of the protection regime (Ban Ki-moon 2012; see also: Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; Kaldor 2003, p.129).

In FPZs, this role is especially taken up by humanitarian actors who effectively occupy the meso space, straddling the nexus between the global and the local spaces. While being an integral part of the transnational network, they are at the same time present within the micro spaces of some of the worst circumstances, thus being able to monitor state behaviour within their domestic environments (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; OHCHR 2005, pp.15–17; UN Security Council 2014a, p.5).

In this sense, they are seen as being able to uniquely generate ‘pressure from below’ (Baker & Chandler 2005, p.2). Thus as opposed to being relegated simply to the role of ‘catalyst’ within a macro level construct, they are seen as having far more operational agency in the local space, providing an alternative to ‘conventional (diplomatic) methods’ (Hilhorst & van Leeuwen 2005, p.538; see also: Rand *et al.* 2008, p.31).

It is in this sense that the ICRC suggests that the so-called *humanitarian* aspect of legal protection is concerned with generating a practical relevance in the face of urgent and imminent threats, including efforts ‘to prevent or put a stop to actual or potential violations of IHL and other relevant bodies of law or norms’ (2008a, p.752; 2012a, p.27; see also: Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.7; Metcalfe 2012, p.1). As such, these non-state actors are seen in the local spaces to assume a substantive role in the effort to translate ‘advancing norms’ into concrete protection action. This effort in itself has many dimensions.

Firstly, directly emulating the norm diffusion model, the ICRC systematically ‘remind’ the various armed actors of their responsibilities under IHL and other applicable laws to protect civilians in order ‘to prevent further violations’ (2012b, p.111; ICRC 2013d) – however, they do this deep within the local spaces of FPZs. In direct efforts to generate a concrete protective impact, they seek to raise awareness of IHL – which in this case is the legal articulation of ‘appropriate behaviour’, persuading armed actors to change their

behaviour in a manner that better complies with the normative standards (ICRC 2008a, p.760).

However protection is also translated into operations through the earlier discussed notion of human security, which being concerned with socio-economic issues (UNDP 1994, p.24). This in itself is conceived through two distinct lens as indicated by the distinction drawn by UNOCHA's Human Security Unit between 'protection' as a top-down (implicitly state-centric) process, and 'empowerment' as a bottom-up issue of human agency (2012, p.5). While the former is largely about protecting the 'worthy victim' by substituting for state failures, the latter recalls the notion of empowering the individual vis-à-vis the state.

2.2.5.1 Protection as Substitution

Humanitarian actors regularly engage in more concrete protection activities within these local spaces, all too often being seen as an alternative to states (Baker & Chandler 2005, p.4; Chandler 2005, p.5; Cohen & Arato 1992 cited in Hamilton 2003, p.69; Kaldor 2003, p.6). Being referred to as the 'third sector' (Smillie 1995, p.32) or 'the missing middle' between citizens and the state' (Garrison 2000 cited in Carmody 2007, p.12), when state capacity to provide essential public goods – including protection – fails, INGOs regularly try to fill the gaps (Bierschenk *et al.* 2002, p.9; Duffield 2001, p.50; Freeman 2002, p.7; Ignatieff 2001, p.8; Sikkink 2002, p.316).

Indeed, expectations for them to substitute for the failing state often run very high in FPZs. For example, Oxfam says that for them '[p]rotection is about improving the safety of people' (Rand *et al.* 2008, p.31). It is in this sense that such actors regularly take on substitutive roles for which 'they have no formal responsibility' (Darcy 2004, p.113) – and indeed are often profoundly ill-equipped for. For example, drawing exclusively on non-coercive means, INGOs are profoundly constrained to deliver on promises of physical security in such circumstances.

Indeed, given their limitations in acutely violent contexts, most revert back to the state-centric vision of protection, systematically prompting states to take up their primary responsibilities to protect people at risk. As Fenton and Loughna claim, humanitarian action is fundamentally 'based on the understanding that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians clearly lies with states' (2013, p.2; see also: Bruderlein 2001, p.222), thus leading us directly back to Hansen and Stepputat's paradox of the inadequacy and indispensability of the state (2001, p.2).

However, in some cases, these non-state actors describe their impetus for acting outside of the state-centric 'duty-bearer' notion, and rather point to so-called 'moral rights'

as the driving force, which as Orend explains, generate a ‘well-grounded and concrete claim on the actions of other people’ (2002, p.17), as well as a ‘moral obligation’ (Ibid, p.54), and are thus claimable by everyone and can be held against everyone (Ibid, p.2).³⁷ Pogge agrees, adding that everyone has a ‘moral duty to respect human rights’, with those being able to do more being obliged to do so (2000, p.46).³⁸

Building on widely held assumptions that INGOs are driven by sentiments of ‘solidarity’ and ‘social-community’ (Cohen & Arato 1992 cited in Hamilton 2003, p.69), seeking to repair ‘the torn fabric of global civil society’ (Keane 2003, pp.13–14; Kaldor 2003, p.6), they are seen as likely vehicle through which the ‘moral rights’ can be achieved. This is especially so with the humanitarian effort, which articulates this impetus to act in a very particular manner.

2.2.5.2 Protection as the Humanitarian Imperative

While humanitarian action is often understood as a social project drawing on this moral impetus, it is also described as being constructed on a set of ‘principles’ which according to sector experts ‘derive their force ultimately from the fundamental moral principle of humanity: that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’ (The Sphere Project 2011, p.20; see also: ICRC 2013c, p.22). In this sense, the humanitarian promise of protection is framed as that of ‘preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity’ (ECHO n.d., p.6; see also: Borton 2009, p.5; Darcy 2004, p.113; ICRC 2009a, p.8).

As an important sector reference, The Sphere Project more specifically states that humanitarian NGOs offer their services ‘on the basis of the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative’ (2011, p.21), which suggests that the humanitarian initiative raises the *obligation to act* in the face of human suffering – in effect emphasizing action in itself, as opposed to necessarily achieving any specific results.³⁹

Taking this deeper, Slim explains that the humanitarian imperative frames humanitarian action ‘as a supreme duty as much as a right’ (2002, p.162). As such, this imperative is understood as stressing that ‘action should be taken to prevent or alleviate *human suffering* arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle’ (The Sphere Project, 2011, p.20, emphasis added; see also: ICRC 1995, pp.1–2; GPCWG 2010, p.15). This emphasis on the urgency of action is seen by many as a

³⁷ It is in this sense that Freeman asserts that people appeal to human rights at the point that legal institutions fail (2002, p.10) or Arendt noted the ‘right to have rights’ (Rancière 2004; Ingram 2008).

³⁸ Ogata and Sen similarly refer to ‘imperfect obligations’, which are general demands that are placed on anyone who is in a position to help (2003, p.9).

³⁹ As Goodale says, ‘it is the idea—and not the many contradictions—of human rights that compels social actors’ to act (2006, p.26).

(re)articulation of the so-called ‘moral duty to respect human rights’ (Pogge 2000, p.46; see also: Freeman 2002, p.6; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.9; Orend 2002, p.34).

However, this emphasis on action risks encouraging spontaneous action as opposed to strategic action designed to achieve specific results (Van den Berg & Quarles van Ufford 2005, p.205). With action being driven by the desire to do something, anything, the actual protective impact achieved is all too often reduced to that of solidarity, or as one group of respondents described it, ‘a good will gesture’ (5F, Christians, Kabo1, Feb14). Although solidarity in dire circumstances is not to be dismissed, it at the same time should not be equated with an effective translation of the promise embodied in global protection norms.

Indeed, noting that all humanitarian intervention raises expectations, making a ‘moral promise to persons in need’, Ignatieff underlines that this trust has all too often been ‘horribly betrayed’, leaving people in danger with ‘no good reason to trust any promise of protection’ (2001, pp.44–45). In the face of multiple translation failures, people at risk are all too often left to fend for themselves. As such, a so-called ‘auto-protection’ capacity, which draws on people’s resilience despite the countless institutional failures to protect, has been increasingly drawn upon by the global protection regime as a critical component of the regime (Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.1; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.iv).

2.2.6 Protection as Resilience⁴⁰

The above sketched top-down institutional-based approaches to protection reflect the global to local trajectories through which globally articulated protection norms are expected to be translated into a concrete impact in local spaces. These top-down approaches call upon people at risk to dis-embed themselves from informal family/community-based protection mechanisms, and put their trust in formal systems – despite the fact that these systems never fully guarantee or deliver the protection required in FPZs (Merry 2005, p.188). Moreover, they largely presume that people at risk embody the character of the ‘worthy victim’. However, arguing that ‘[h]uman nature is both resilient and frail’, Scheper-Hughes warns against making such simplistic and categorical assumptions (2008, p.42).

Indeed, as the institutional-based protection efforts are exposed as deeply fallible in FPZs, the bottom-up conception of individual ‘empowerment’ mentioned above has progressively gained traction as an alternative approach to protection. Stemming from the so-called resilience agenda, this auto-protection approach is constructed upon

⁴⁰ The terms ‘resilience’, ‘self-protection’ and ‘auto-protection’ are used relatively interchangeably throughout this work.

assumptions of independent agency of people at risk. Observing that 'agency and victimhood are not mutually exclusive', Nnaemeka argues that 'victims are also agents who can change their lives and affect other lives in radical ways' (1997, p.3). In stark contrast to the notion of the 'worthy victim', this bottom-up approach draws on this agency and self-reliance as a means of protection. Describing this as a 'talent for life' (2008, p.28), Scheper-Hughes suggests that people have the capacity 'not only to survive, but to thrive' in the face of violent crises (2008, p.42; see also: Merry 2007, p.202). In this people at risk are reconceived as active agents able to keep themselves safe.

Framed as having agency to act in their world, the 'resilient' individual is seen as having the capacity 'to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances' (Bandura 2006, p.164; see also: Ahearn 2001 cited in Hitlin & Elder Jr. 2006, p.35; Fierke 2007, p.61; Giddens 1984, p.10). While 'exposure' and vulnerability to the stress is considered important to stimulating this capacity, emphasis in this model is placed on adaptive or coping capacity, with 'resilience' referring to one's ability to adjust to the consequences of such exposure (McCarthy *et al.* 2001, p.6; see also: Adger 2006, p.269; Chambers 2006, p.33; Cundill *et al.* 2014, p.5; Luers 2005, p.217; O'Brien *et al.* 2004, pp.304–305).

As such, in operational terms, while auto-protection comprises the protective mechanisms that people at risk themselves are able to generate, the resilience approach of humanitarian actors includes all efforts on their part to 'empower' people at risk to maximise upon this independent capacity (Castleden *et al.* 2011, p.369; Newman 2004, p.358; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.4).

From a more sceptical perspective, Duffield suggests that this approach more accurately reflects a growing trend in which the shortfalls of formal institutions are expected to be covered by individual capacity to 'self-manage' (2012, p.841; see also: Chandler 2012, p.213). In this sense, the resilience agenda offers an extra-ordinarily convenient re-framing of the notion of protection. In spotlighting a community's 'capacity to absorb shocks and still maintain function', the notion of social resilience focuses on the adaptive capacity for renewal, re-organization and development (Folke 2006, p.253; see also: Adger 2000, p.349; Hall & Lamont 2013, p.2; Walker *et al.* 2004, p.1), the resilience agenda implicitly transfers the responsibility to protect to these communities (and at-risk individuals themselves), creating a grounds upon which global actors are absolved of the responsibility for the profound failings of the global protection vision.

The theoretical notion of resilience provides a fertile ground for this reinvention. Firstly, it identifies the importance of exposure to serious threat in developing resilience

(Masten 2001, p.228; see also: Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw 2008a, p.31), with 'strengths under stress' being understood to be 'forged through dealing with adversity' (Walsh 2003, p.52; see also: Windle 2010, p.1). With the approach implying that 'communities have to be exposed, opened up or, in some way, abandoned to the possibility of risk and uncertainty' (Duffield 2012, p.481) as a means of bringing their resilience to the fore, dire protection failures are presented in a positive light.

Building on Folke's observation that the uncertainty and surprise associated with disturbances and shocks have 'the potential to create opportunity for doing new things, for innovation and for development' (2006, p.253), Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw suggest that 'positive outcomes are achieved in the context of adversity' (2008b, p.887). When applied to the critical circumstances of FPZs, this logic calls for 'embracing the uncertainty as opportunity' (Duffield 2012, p.481), as though this is a good thing. With Levine *et al.* noting the 'growing argument that crises can be turned into transformational opportunities' (2012, p.4), exposure to deadly crisis is effectively reframed as a positive opportunity.

Underpinning this are claims that resilience is inherent. For example, describing it within child psychology as a 'common phenomenon' coming from so-called 'ordinary magic', Masten suggests that resilience draws on 'the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources' and as such, is a 'result of ordinary rather than extraordinary processes' (2001, p.227; Cundill *et al.* 2014, pp.6–7). With Walsh similarly describing it as 'mastering the art of the possible' (2003, p.56), resilience is seen as being within the capacity of everyone. This effectively normalises expectations regarding the capacity to survive in the face of extreme challenges, with the resilient community and/or individual being assumed to be skilled at 'making the best of the options available' (Christopolos & Farrington 2004, p.22). The capacity 'to "struggle well" in the face of adversity' (Walsh 2003, p.52; see also: Castleden *et al.* 2011, p.369; Masten 2001, p.235; Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw 2008a, p.30; Windle 2010, p.1) is simply expected.

As opposed to the 'worthy victim', who as a passive recipient of abuses, awaits the external saviour to protect them, this reframing rather establishes the foundation for justifying disengagement, with Manyena pointing out that it enables a 'hands-off' approach to protection (2006, p.434). Hargreaves *et al.* agree that the resilience agenda 'takes pressure off the international community to act' (2012, p.24). People at risk are increasingly expected to generate independent protection options relying exclusively on their own wherewithal, resources and capacity that stems from this inherent resilience.

With Chandler describing this as an 'avoidance of political responsibility' (2006, p.19), the resilience agenda in effect absolves the global protection regime of its failure to

deliver on its promise to protect. In rendering their survival capacity as unexceptional, the failure to 'struggle well' becomes the explanatory factor. Protection failures are no longer about top-down processes that fail to translate the globally articulated universal promise of protection, but are rather about people at risk failing to step up to protect themselves. In effect, the responsibility to protect is transferred directly to those at risk.

Fully accepting this transference of responsibilities, some practical analysts actually claim that 'in essence, people are their own best protectors' (Mahony 2006, p.24). Indeed, with IFRC arguing that more attention needs to be given 'to what affected communities can do for themselves' (2004, p.13), many of the above described humanitarian actors engage with the resilience agenda as an approach to protection. But critics argue that this approach in effect amounts to little more than support for 'what people can do for themselves' (Levine *et al.* 2012, p.4).

2.2.7 Protection as Offensive Auto-Protection

Despite repeatedly pointing to dramatic power inequities, stressing that 'you cannot resist a gun', respondents did indeed demonstrate an astonishing resilience within their dire circumstances. Undoubtedly, people do resort to auto-protective measures when they are left to fend for themselves in the face of imminent threat. Indeed, I develop a typology of strategies adopted, including toleration, adaptation, negotiation, and self-redress or confrontation. However, given that these measures are typically undertaken while people are literally staring down the barrel of a gun, they repeatedly prove to be highly inadequate vis-a-vis the magnitude of threat.

More to the point of this discussion, this independent survival capacity has little to do with the global promise of protection embodied in the ever 'advancing norms'. Comprising largely of people's capacity to tolerate prolonged exposure to on-going civilian-targeted violence, auto-protection is a thin substitute for the failure of formal institutions. Indeed, globally articulated protection norms largely fail to penetrate into these acutely violent micro spaces of FPZs.

The global protection vision, through its macro lens doggedly holds onto its top-down state-centric logic which presumes the global vision is simply superimposed onto the micro spaces of FPZs as though these spaces are blank slates awaiting this globally articulated normative wisdom.⁴¹ However, a careful tracing of the trajectories through which global norms are assumed to be transmitted into the micro spaces shows that their

⁴¹ Merry points out that international perspectives are translated 'down' far more than grassroots perspectives are translated 'up' (2005, p.216).

actual penetration into these spaces is minimal in either an ideational or practical form. People at risk are all too often left to fend for themselves.

As such, although they reach to the various potentials in case they may deliver, as seen in their hopes for international intervention, global aspirational promises remain extremely nebulous for most. As such, as a group of women in South Sudan stated, such ideas are only interesting for them if they are 'not fake' (3F, Rumbek, near-Oxfam, Sept25). Given the challenges they face to stay alive in FPZs, they are looking for hard action, which for the most part are bottom-up initiatives springing from their of their own doing – even if they remain highly inadequate vis-a-vis the threats they face. In this, defensive auto-protection strategies can progressively take on an offensive tone.

Unsurprisingly, prolonged exposure to perpetual threat leads to the accumulation of deeply personal pain, losses and suffering which quickly pushes people beyond the limits of inherent capacity to absorb and cope. Nordstrom has long argued that 'violence reconfigures its victims' (2004, p.59). One of the critical consequences is social fracturing. As the extreme levels of fear, threat and loss accumulate, people at risk are driven to identify those around them who are particularly committed to protecting them (Abbink 2001, p.210; Kasfir 2004, p.59; Rotberg 2004, p.28). While under threat, a corresponding antagonistic sense of the 'other' also emerges (Laclau & Mouffe 1985 cited in Bowman 2001, p.36; Mouffe 2005, pp.15–16; Schroder & Schmidt 2001, p.2; Sen 2006, p.91). Former neighbours, and even family members that do not fall within their so-called 'solidarity group', are often reimagined as enemies, presumed to pose an imminent threat.

With global aspirational norms largely failing to penetrate into FPZs, local social norms govern such contexts⁴² – but they themselves are also altered and re-organised within these hostile contexts. In both case studies, the social norm of revenge moved to the fore, prompting the use of violence for much more than auto-protection, but more-so as a proactive means of auto-justice. This often entailed extremely personalised deadly violence perpetrated by neighbours against their own neighbours who were now seen as the antagonistic other. These dimensions of the protection regime are typically invisible through the macro lens – at least until they emerge as critical factors altering the macro dynamics of the broader conflict – as was seen in both cases. Indeed, it is only through a micro and meso level analysis that these additional dimensions of the protection regime become evident. From the micro level, people at risk try to draw upon all aspects of this complex and multi-dimensional protection regime, including both formal and informal, state-centric and individual-centric mechanisms in their desperate attempts to survive.

⁴² 'Norms' in this sense articulate what is considered 'normal' behaviour as opposed to the 'aspirational' characteristic of global norms.

However, it is most often the locally generated mechanisms that have the strongest foothold. Unfortunately, these mechanisms tend to perpetuate further dimensions of already complex dynamics of violence within the micro spaces of armed conflict – and indeed can dramatically alter the macro dynamics of the on-going armed conflicts. While these issues are explored more extensively in the following chapters, the next section sketches analytic approach taken throughout this research effort.

2.3 Analysis & Methodology

This work speaks to a set of assumptions that underpin constructivism's norm diffusion theory as vision of how protection works. Being an IR theory, it is unsurprisingly state-centric, focusing on the global sphere and macro processes. Ironically the individual at risk is rendered invisible in this theoretical frame. In the absence of insight into the lived experience, the theory is able to dismiss the many disjunctures that prevent this aspirational vision of protection from being translated into concrete reality. However, in suggesting that the value of aspirational norms should be judged in relation to their capacity to impact on the micro level lived reality, this work pits a top-down, global, macro vision of protection against the micro level lived experiences of protection in FPZs. While the IR perspective presumes the primacy of the macro top-down perspective, analysis that looks up from the micro level illuminates quite a different reality. It is the meso perspective that best spotlights the interface between the two perspectives, revealing a complex politics of protection that is largely invisible through a macro lens – the lens that almost singularly informs the global protection regime.

2.3.1 Framing

Comparing and contrasting between levels of analysis is largely a question of framing which is understood here as the influential process of identifying and emphasizing aspects of an issue (Jerit 2008, p.2). Reflecting feminist observations that 'all systems of knowledge depend on deeming certain issues as irrelevant or of little significance' (Charlesworth 1999, p.381), analytic frames by their very nature spotlight select elements, while pushing others into the shadows (Autesserre 2009, p.254). As such, as the previous chapter has already begun to indicate, framing unsurprisingly has significant influence on how the protection problem is defined.

Some scholars have stressed the importance of disaggregating levels of analysis; being seen as particularly necessary in order to capture the experience of the individual (Fierke 2014, p.1; Migdal 2001, p.173; Tickner 1992, p.29). With conflict scholars particularly emphasizing the need for such differentiating (Jeong 2000, p.48; Sylvester

2012, p.490),⁴³ Kalyvas proposes a conflict analysis frame which specifically differentiates between the macro, meso and micro levels. In this model the macro level is understood as spotlighting the political elite, formal structural and organizational issues and processes, and the larger causes of the war; while the micro alternatively spotlights the individual and their experiences of violence within the larger conflict (2006, p.10; see also: Marriage 2013, p.2; Migdal 2001, p.173). The meso level represents the space between these two extremes, where especially the relationship between the political actors and institutions with civilians who occupy the micro space is revealed (Kalyvas 2006, p.106). This is the space in which each perspective tries to make sense of the other.

Particularly relevant to this research project is the observation that the macro perspective is often the only level examined in conflict analysis (Kalyvas 2006, p.10; Migdal 2001, p.173), thus obscuring what can better be seen through a meso and micro level lens. This also indicates that those in the macro space put little emphasis on meso level analysis which seeks to make sense of the all too likely disconnects. This macro level proclivity reflects IR traditions and earlier mentioned realist folklore that foster a reflexive exclusive focus on the state and the international system (Fierke 2014, p.1; Sylvester 2012, p.486). In efforts to help 'make positive sense of the messy reality of war' (Leander 2004, p.69), only formal processes concerning the elite power brokers and their political contestation, the broad causes of war, and formal processes are deemed important (Autesserre 2010, p.43; Kalyvas 2006, p.10; Marriage 2013, p.2). However, as illustrated in the previous chapter, the macro lens is substantiated on a number of critical pre-suppositions that create an invisible back-drop that profoundly influences what is seen through that lens. Macro level analysis merges all too conveniently with the earlier described myth of the state, and thus re-enforces a pre-determined state-centric frame.⁴⁴

The consequence of this reflexive reliance on a macro lens, is that insights into micro level lived realities are obscured (Avant *et al.* 2010, p.2; Wibben 2011, p.19). What does not correspond with the macro level preconceptions is either forced to fit or is dismissed as irrelevant. This explains the macro tendency to dismiss violence as a 'natural consequence' of war (Richards 2004, p.11; Kalyvas 2006, p.20), which in effect obscures much of the micro dynamics of violence sketched in the previous chapter. While a macro

⁴³ This call for disaggregation of levels of analysis is of course not new, with Waltz having distinguished between the individual, the state and the 'society of states' in his 1959 studies of the *causes of war* (1959; see also: Jacoby 2008, p.27; Short 1997, pp.39–41).

⁴⁴ In the case of armed conflict, this is further propagated by IHL which presupposes that parties to an armed conflict are 'rational monolithic groups' (Kalyvas 2006, p.10); with a coherent leadership that has control over their members (ICTY 2008, para.194–198); having rational aims (Sassòli *et al.* 2011, p.2; Pejic 2011, pp.191–192). The previous chapter has already indicated the extent to which this fails to unfold in the micro spaces of armed conflict in FPZs.

framing naturally emphasizes the political elite and the grand lines of armed conflict, the everyday lived experiences and individual protection needs of the affected population are obscured (Call 2007, p.382).

This generates a central conundrum for the global protection regime. Arguing that '[n]eglecting the human elements for strategic interest and politics renders the injurious nature of war a consequence rather than the actual focal point of war' (1985 cited in Sylvester 2012, p.484), the preference for macro level analysis actually obscures precisely the insights that are essential for the global protection regime. While the *raison d'être* of the regime is concern for individuals and protecting them against outrages, injury and death (Brysk cited in Goodale 2007a, p.6; Merry 2007a, p.42; Provost 2005, p.1), micro level insights into the lived experiences of protection crises, which should be the primary focus of the global protection regime, remain largely invisible.

Describing the macro perspective as studying war 'down from places that sweep blood, tears and laughter away' (2012, p.484), Sylvester reiterates that war and its consequences cannot be understood unless it is also 'studied up from people who experience it in myriad ways' (Ibid, p.483). Indeed reflecting the concern of a number of scholars that the 'view from below is too rarely explored' in armed conflict (Mehler 2012, p.52; see also: Gilligan 2009, p.131; Jennings 2007, p.35; Kalyvas 2006, p.6), this work highlights the importance of drawing the micro and meso level perspectives into the analytic process.

Building on Richards' claim that 'war is a social project' (2004, pp.5; see also: Jennings 2007, p.35; Riches 1986a, p.vii), it follows those scholars who suggest focusing on the household level, the informal, and the individual lived experiences, in order to shed light on the social as opposed to political drivers of violence (Abbink 2001, p.203; Gilligan 2009, p.131; Malešević 2010, p.2; Schroder & Schmidt 2001, p.3). Indeed, as a means of accessing the complex mosaic of violence that is driven by insecurity, uncertainty, fear, opportunity, and revenge – as opposed to political objectives *per se*, many suggest 'decoupling' the study of violence⁴⁵ from war (Kalyvas 2002, p.3; see also: Arendt 1969; Jackman 2002, p.399; Malešević 2010, p.332).

As such, the analytic approach of this thesis consists largely of the comparing and contrasting of macro and micro level insights into protection crises in FPZs. The macro level perspective is largely constructed through review of literature, reports and documents produced by especially those actors (aka: norm entrepreneurs) who animate the global

⁴⁵ With Nordstrom cautioning against reducing violence to 'the intention to harm' (2004, p.60; see also: Marvin 1986, p.124), this highlights the fact that violence often has many purposes, and is seldom 'senseless' (Richards 2004, p.4; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004, p.3; Suhrke 2012, p.3).

protection regime including for example, the UN Secretary General (UNSG); the UN Security Council (UNSC); the African Union (AU); various UN agencies; various INGOs including OXFAM, MSF, HRW, Amnesty International; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the International Crisis Group (ICG); and others.

The micro perspective is constructed from the empirical data collected from conflict affected individuals *in situ* who participated in the field research (detailed below). Building on Jacoby's notion of 'attribution', these individuals are understood to be continually trying to make sense of the circumstances in which they find themselves (2008, p.20; See also: Giffen 2013, p3; Hein 1991). Thus, taking the respondents as experts on their experiences, the micro level perspective presented throughout the thesis draws extensively on the perceptions, observations, insights, interpretations and analysis provided by the more than 2300 individuals who participated in this research. While these individual statements do not necessarily represent 'the truth' or indicate a universal perspective, the quotations used represent regularly repeated sentiments.⁴⁶ As such, they serve to illustrate a textured and intimate indication of lived experiences of violence and protection crises.

However, pitting the macro against the micro generates the impression dichotomous absolutes. Arguably, both perspectives allocate distinct, fixed and thus reductionist roles to the actors animating FPZs. For example, while the macro level spotlights the political elite, as Rancière points out, the political stage is always populated by 'its always-ambiguous actors' (2004, p.301-302; see also: Cohen 2000, p.14). The macro versus micro dichotomous frames of war versus violence; political versus social; party to the conflict versus individual armed actor; and passive victim versus resilient agent effectively severs any relationship between these extremes. Ambiguity and nuance is lost. It is the meso lens that captures the 'grey space' that sits between these two presumed extremes. The meso level perspective is concerned with the inter-relationship, including connections and disconnects, of these two extremes, both of which typically exist in disregard of the other.

From a horizontal perspective, it is the meso lens that reveals what Fierke refers to as a 'field of relationships' which is characterised by a fluidity between the identities of 'a threatener, the threatened, the protector or means of protection, and the protected' (2007,

⁴⁶ Quotations from these interviews are used extensively in order to reflect the nuanced insights provided by respondents. Although significant effort has been made to remain as true to the words of the respondent, these quotes reflect an interpretation as opposed to direct translation as responses often went through at least three levels of translation. But because they reflect the words of some 2300 individuals, the sentiments reflected in this work have been extensively triangulated.

p.46).⁴⁷ In highlighting the fact that depending on the particular circumstances, any one individual could don any one of these roles, any assumptions of predetermined or 'single causal relationship' between the various components of this field, are quashed (Ibid, p.51). In spotlighting this fluidity, it is through the meso lens that the fact that the state plays both the role of primary protector, and primary perpetrator of violence is made most visible; as is the fact that people at risk equally move fluidly between the roles of the threatened, the protected, the protector, and indeed the threatener. In this, captures the distortions that are necessary to create a functional interface between the two perspectives.

From a vertical perspective the meso lens also captures the coherence of top-down and bottom-up dimensions of the protection vision, revealing the interplay between what appear to be dichotomous dimensions. While the global perspective assumes protection is a top-down process, constructed upon a contiguous global-to-local trajectory through which globally articulated norms are translated into the micro spaces, the meso lens spotlights critical disconnects that prevent these norms from penetrating into the local spaces. In this, it reveals the progressive narrowing of the global promise from human rights, to physical protection, to the humanitarian imperative, to self-protection. Finally, global ideals actually have little influence on these local spaces.

Thus, as the meso lens reveals, there is a diversity of bridging attempts in which people at risk in the micro space reach into the global space in efforts to pull the promise of protection into their micro space (ie: calling for international actors to act). Similarly, albeit more damningly, it also exposes the reach of global actors into the micro spaces to pull the inherent resilience of people at risk into the global space, surreptitiously reframing it as an integral element of the protection regime, when in fact it rather serves as a means of abdicating responsibilities to protect. It is also creates the space for innovation that could better bridge the two dimensions.

Finally, it also spotlights the inevitable leakage of micro level dynamics of violence into the macro frame of war, despite the fact that these dynamics remain invisible to the macro perspective until they do indeed alter the broad dynamics of the armed conflict within which they are embedded.

As such, while the contrasting of the extremes of the macro and micro perspectives is done throughout this piece of work, the meso level lens is also used to spotlight the misconceptions that the macro perspective holds about the micro level realities and vice versa. In this, it exposes the dysfunctional inter-play between these two extremes and

⁴⁷ Throughout this work, the terms 'victim' and 'threatened' are used relatively interchangeably; as are 'perpetrator' and 'threatener'.

sheds a more nuanced light on how the global protection regime fails to ensure that global protection norms make a difference for people who most need them to do so.

2.3.2 Research Methodology

As much as my idealism appreciates the progress of ‘advancing norms’, having worked for a number of years with people living in conflict zones who have suffered repeated raw exposure to on-going violence, I have observed the desperate need for global protection norms to deliver on their promise. In this research project I have hoped to illustrate this urgent need as a means of amplifying the magnitude of repeated shortfalls. From one angle, the research speaks to calls by a number of scholars for the need for further academic research conducted during conflict (Gilligan 2009, p.131; Richards 2004, p.5), emphasizing specifically the need for enhanced focus on the micro level (Jennings 2007, p.35; Kalyvas 2006, p.6; Mehler 2012, p.52). Indeed, following Richards claim that it is only through ‘stepping up close’ that we can begin to analyse such situations (2004, p.11), this research project was undertaken in acutely violent periods in both South Sudan and the Central African Republic. However, in such contexts, the situatedness, positionality and reflexivity of the researcher are of particular importance.

2.3.2.1 Situatedness, Positionality and Reflexivity

Rose points out that while research is undertaken within a specific set of circumstances, these circumstances inevitably influence the outcome (1997, p.305). Indeed, the fact that the field research for this thesis was largely conducted in periods of acute armed conflict in both South Sudan and CAR is part of what makes it original. However, the circumstances of these contexts unquestionably influenced important research decisions. Most obviously, insecurity influenced where I could go and how freely I could move once there. I myself experienced both subtle and overt physical and verbal threats; security lock-downs within housing complexes while armed confrontations unfolded outside the gates; and break-ins into my housing compound in the middle of the night by armed assailants.

Further, in order to navigate within these difficult circumstances, I looked to various INGOs for facilitation. PACT, an international peace and reconciliation NGO facilitated my first stint of research in South Sudan between mid-July to mid-October 2012. Although acute violence was taking place during this period both along the disputed border with Sudan, and in Jonglei state, I was unable to access either due to insecurity. Alternatively, I was able to visit Juba, Bentiu & Pariang, Torit & Kapoeta, Wau & Raja, Rumbek, and

Bor.⁴⁸ As such, this research period proved extremely fruitful as a foundational exploration undertaken with populations that have experienced the long years of the previous civil war, but who were at that time experiencing a relative respite from on-going overt armed conflict. Unfortunately, about one year later, South Sudan again erupted into acute internal armed conflict. As such, I returned to explore these dynamics. Under the invitation of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the UN Protection Cluster, I was able to visit some of the worst conflict affected areas, including Juba, Leer, Rumbek, Ganyiel, Bentiu, Koch, and Bor between October to December 2014.

My research in CAR was initially facilitated by my former employer *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF). Between mid-November 2012 to early January 2013, I also visited the southeast of the country to study the protection implications of the infiltration of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the localities of Zemio and Mboki. At the same time, I also visited Boguila in the north of the country, to establish a relatively non-crisis baseline only weeks prior to the actual on-set of the Séléka crisis in that area. As the Séléka crisis escalated, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) supported my access into the more acutely violent northern villages of Ndele, Kabo, Batangaffo, and Buka, all of which were on the so-called frontline. During this period of January to March 2013, the Séléka was perceived but much of the conflict affected population to be occupying their localities. They fully expected the presence of these 'rebels' to be short-lived, with the state as they had known it, being quickly reinstated. However, the overthrow of former President Bozizé on March 24, 2013 saw the Séléka seize power and install themselves as the 'authorities' establishing a kind of permanency to the extreme chaos that was unfolding.⁴⁹

I returned to CAR in July to September 2013 to conduct further research specifically within the capital of Bangui during the very violent period in which the Séléka was settling in as the *de facto* authorities under the very weak leadership of 'President' Djotodia. His resignation shortly thereafter marked a new phase of the crisis that was characterised by civilian-on-civilian violence, during which the vast majority of the minority Muslim population was either killed or forced to flee the country. I thus returned for a three-week stint in September 2014 to explore the experiences of individuals who had been forced to flee to eastern Cameroon under imminent deadly threat that was largely perpetrated by former neighbour, friends and family members.

⁴⁸ Maps illustrating the areas visited in each case are available at the end of this section.

⁴⁹ My flight out of Bangui on March 24, 2013, the day the Séléka troops penetrated the capital was the last one to leave before the international airport was closed due to the crisis. Employees of all types were frantically scrambling to leave their posts to go and navigate the approaching threats.

While these broader circumstances illustrate the 'situatedness' of my research, this is distinguished from my so-called 'positionality' which refers more specifically to my personal position as the researcher and that of the research participants I worked with (Rose 1997, p.305; see also: Nencel 2014, p.76). This is again particularly relevant as I came into this research with more than 15 years of experience working within such contexts and on such issues. As such, my decision to focus on the topic chosen, and indeed the particular approach taken is deeply grounded in this previous experience. More concretely, my ability to work effectively within these zones is intimately tied to this experience, while opportunities to access the chosen contexts, as hot as they were, were created through former professional contacts. These factors together significantly influenced what Savin-Baden & Howell Major refer to as my 'personal research stance' (2013, p.68).

However my personal positionality also had direct research implications. For example, with foreigners in especially the deeply rural localities in FPZs being systematically associated with either the UN or INGOs and humanitarian assistance, it was evident that I was systematically assumed to be tied to such entities. However, this constraint was weighed against the logistical and security advantages gained through these associations. In both cases, it was only through NGO facilitation that I was able to reach these distal areas. Further, inevitably being a critical challenge in violent contexts, daily security management was rendered more feasible within the fold of an NGO.

Indeed, given the volatile circumstances within which most of my field work was undertaken, my daily research activities were largely shaped by the local security dynamics. The distance and direction I could move varied daily according to the shifting security circumstances. Many days of planned work were cancelled. I spent more than a few days hunkered down on various compounds waiting for nearby armed confrontations to come to an end. In other cases, complete trips were cancelled and alternative destinations were identified. In this sense, my research stance has deeply influenced research choices including the contexts I focused on, the specific areas visited, the questions that were explored, who was interviewed, and whose voice was given space to be heard in the writing.

Moreover, while my decision to focus on this question stems from my work experience, this same experience has engendered a distinct perspective on these issues. Having long observed institutional failures to translate protection promises, my personal interest is specifically related to understanding how people at risk make sense of these failures and how they manage to keep moving in the face of deadly threat. These elements

offer some few glimpses into the various personal factors that have influenced what Savin-Baden and Howell Major refer to as my 'preferential perspectives' (2013, p.70).

It is in this sense that scholars point to the importance of 'reflexivity', or consideration of how one's own experiences, beliefs, biases and perspectives are likely to influence their research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p.68-71; see also: Van Stapele 2014, p16). For example, I admittedly harbour significant frustration with all aspects of the global protection regime, and indeed have limitless respect for those who have been forced to find their own way in these dire circumstances. While I would desperately wish for the global protection vision to be actualised for people facing grave risk, it is equally very difficult for me to accept that average people can readily resort to the use of deadly violence, even if for the purposes of protecting themselves and their families against equally deadly threats. Such strong feelings inevitably influence the research process, especially in the case of qualitative research.

As Rose says, 'researchers are entangled in the research process in all sorts of ways' (1997, p.314), and this is especially so in FPZs. As one who has never been forced to endure such experiences, I carry both a general 'white-person's' guilt, as well as a type of survivor's guilt.

This also alludes to some of the power dimensions that are inherent to the 'privileged position' that the researcher holds (Rose 1997, p.307; see also: van Stapele 2014, p.15). Research on protection issues within the micro spaces of FPZs is imbued with complex power dynamics which inevitably influence the researcher, the inter-relations with research participants, and decisions on what is eventually written (van Stepele 2014, p.15). For example, being a clearly identifiable foreigner, I was regularly perceived as someone who could influence people's circumstances – if I chose to do so. I was widely perceived as having access to the corridors of power, which comparatively speaking was not mistaken. More concretely it was often assumed that I had resources. This in itself at times influenced my decisions on where I went and who I talked to. While an appeal for my help was relatively constant, in some cases the need was more urgent. For example in the case of illness or injury, my desperate desire to help found me making rather pathetic offerings of vitamin pills and aspirin – generating a sense of extreme impotence that I'd rather avoid than repeatedly confront.

Beyond my white skin, I personally embodied countless indicators of the power differentials, ranging from the fact that I carried a bottle of water and travelled in a vehicle. Some assumed 'authority' simply based on the fact that I was 'holding the pen' – a powerful differentiating factor in contexts characterised by extremely high illiteracy rates.

Others pointed to the inequities through far more discrete means. For example, a number of people appreciated the fact that I had left my 'comfortable life' and travelled far to come and listen to their stories. While this offers them nothing concrete, many suggested that this 'gesture' was important to them.

Although this left me face-to-face with a profound sense of guilt in the choices that I have, it also made it clear that my presence in itself, was integrated into people's perception of the notion of protection. In some cases, the 'gesture' of my visit was the closest they would get to a manifestation of the global promise of protection. As a powerful display of global inequities, I was repeatedly destabilised by such observations – and my position of privilege.

Further, given the sensitive nature of FPZs, the simple fact of engaging with foreigners can put individuals at additional grave risk. And there are no absolute means of managing such risks, although the power disparities intensify the sense of responsibility to do so. Thus throughout the research process, I dedicated significant energy to explaining the research project; emphasising the importance of free and informed consent; and ensuring that the individuals approached were given adequate space to refuse participation (although very few did so); and ensuring confidentiality of the data collected.

Indeed, the management of sensitive data in conflict zones poses a very particular challenge, with forceful confiscation of sensitive data being a very real risk. Keeping all data both confidential and anonymous was critical in terms of managing security risks for both myself, and more pointedly, those who participated. As such, all data collected was anonymised. No interviews were recorded. Only abbreviated notes were documented in English (which is not the locally spoken language in either case study). More sensitive statements were cryptically noted so as to be difficult to decipher and/or trace to the source in the case that the data was gained by individuals with malicious intent. Electronic inputting of this data entailed the grouping of salient quotes under thematic headings. As such no one interview was documented in its entirety. As illustrated in the body of this work, in-putted data was tagged with dates, locations, and personalised contextual reminder, but remain fully anonymous to the external observer.

However, security management periodically punctuated my privileged position in a far more dramatic manner. As a foreigner, I was regularly extracted from acutely violent circumstances – while those living within these micro spaces were left to find their way within the unfolding dire circumstances. This was particularly poignant in one case in which an IDP camp was located immediately next to the airstrip. While awaiting for my evacuation airlift, I discussed with a former director of a government ministry who was now

unable to leave the IDP camp for fear of being hunted down by armed actors. While violence maybe a powerful equalizer, the fact that not all are equally vulnerable to its impact was underlined as I boarded my plane and left him behind.

Finally, this unease was exponentially amplified in those cases in which I was able to return to locations previously visited. I approached such opportunities with trepidation, expecting people to respond with disgust on seeing me again – when often their dire circumstances had only eroded further. As happened more than once, I knew that inevitably some of the people with whom I had met in the past would now be dead. In such cases, I found myself moving from respondent to respondent asking about their experiences with a deep sense of shame. In my inability to act on their behalf, I often felt like a voyeur, which the Merriam-Webster dictionary all too precisely defines as ‘a prying observer who is usually seeking the sordid or the scandalous’. Thus, although I strived for the position of ‘empathic neutrality’, which balances empathy while not being too involved (Quinn Patton 2002, p.50), this may not have always been achieved.

2.3.2.2 Research Tools

Given that this research provides a relatively unique glimpse into lived experiences of violence and protection as they unfold in acutely violent micro spaces of FPZs, it aims largely to be illustrative and explanatory. The objective of the work is to contrast the globally constructed macro vision of how protection works with the lived realities of protection, capturing the incongruences through a meso lens. The two cases of South Sudan and Central African Republic are taken as two illustrative examples of FPZs. As such, as opposed to directly comparing and contrasting the two cases amongst themselves, this work particularly draws on the similarities between them and contrasts these with the macro level vision.

The research is based on interpretive, qualitative tools, relying primarily on direct observation and interview techniques (detailed below). However, throughout much of the research, I was also engaged as a participant observer on multiple levels. Firstly, in addition to being widely perceived to be a member of the various NGOs that hosted me, I also participated directly in this role, conducting various NGO programmatic reviews; engaging in humanitarian debates and workshops; and contributing to the ever-evolving context analysis as part of the research process. In this, I particularly capitalised on the opportunity to engage with the national staff of these organizations, who as gatekeepers, served as important contextual translators, shedding valuable interpretive light on issues being explored and providing critical ‘triangulation’.

Similarly, I worked with a diversity of research assistants/translators. These individuals were selected according to their language skills, gender, and positions within the population as the needs varied according to the portions of populations I was seeking to reach. They also served as important sounding boards and triangulation for interpretation of the general narrative, as well as my evolving analysis. However, semi-structured interviews with conflict affected individuals constituted the preponderance of my data collection processes.⁵⁰

The specific quotes selected for use in the thesis was selected on their illustrative value. In most cases, the selected quotes represent statements that were made by many respondents. The actual quotes selected typically were those that best articulated the point being made. In other cases the selection was based on the backstory of the person making the statement. In any case the quotes selected reflect widely iterated statements unless otherwise indicated.

Semi-structured Interviews

The bulk of my empirical data was collected through the some 970 interviews conducted for the most part with individuals and small groups (typically 1-3 people per session), with more than 2300 individuals in total participating in these interviews.⁵¹ Interviewees were selected in a semi-random manner, with consideration given to ethnic, gender and age diversity. This was augmented by interviews with specifically selected key informants. While local protocol systematically required initial discussions with Community Leaders, further key sources were identified according to their roles, their access to information and analysis, their specific experiences, gender and age. The final decision on participation, made by the individual approached, was generally determined according to their availability and willingness to participate, although few of those approached refused.

On an average day of field research, some 5-8 interviews were conducted, with notes being transcribed in the evenings and early morning. With each interview lasting on average about 60 minutes, the participants were sometimes fluid, with individuals

⁵⁰ Although qualitative methodological tools are considered to reflect a lower level of measured precision, this in this case was balanced with the large number of interviews conducted. Further, interpretive distortions have also been minimised by the broad experience that I brought into the process.

⁵¹ Given the security constraints within which the research was conducted, the opportunity for 'repeat interviews' with the same interviewees was extremely limited. Therefore, I followed Gusterson's approach that allows for a progressive 'branching' and unfolding of the narrative, with each new interview being designed to build on learning from the previous, thus cumulatively constructing the general narrative, progressively extracting the 'recurrent discursive themes', and in each case, identifying the new themes to be explored in future interviews (2009, p.105).

sometimes leaving part way through, while others joined in once the process was underway. As such, the actual number of individual participants interviewed is an estimate.

Summary of Field Work Interviews												
Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple Interviewed	Male	Female	UN/INGO	NGO / Nat Staff	Officials	Community Leader	Civilians	Religious Leaders	Total no. of days
South Sudan	16.07.12-15.10.12	170	418	241	177	30	36	70	43	238	8	13 weeks
CAR	20.11.12-24.03.13	378	891	444	447	87	104	45	85	544	26	18 weeks
CAR-Bangui	19.07.13-05-09.13	131	328	136	192	37	25	5	35	222	4	7 weeks
CAR-Cameroon	04.09.14-23.09.14	76	240	170	70	15	15	8	48	150	4	3 weeks
South Sudan	14.10.14-17.12.14	218	513	236	277	46	6	40	22	397	3	9 weeks
Totals		973	2390	1227	1163	215	186	168	233	1551	45	50 weeks
Percentages				51%	49%	9%	8%	7%	10%	65%	2%	

Of the some 2300 individuals interviewed, 49% were female. Some 65% of the respondents were 'general citizens', while others represented various 'key informant' perspectives. Some 10% of the respondents were local community leaders; 7% were more government officials, including (often former) military and police; and some 2% were religious leaders. Some 9% were INGO & UN international staff, while another 8% were national staff of either these or national NGOs.⁵²

Of the total 973 interviews conducted, 388 (or 40%) were conducted in two research stints in South Sudan; while 585 interviews (or 60%) were conducted during three stints in CAR. The vast majority of these interviews were conducted through translators. In South Sudan, the main languages spoken by interviewees included Dinka, Nuer, Arabic, Taposa, and Shilook, with all being translated into English. In CAR the main interviewee languages were Sangho, Zande, Gbaya, and Arabic, all of which were translated into French. It is notable that even though English is now an official language of South Sudan; and French is such in CAR, few individuals outside of the national capitals speak these languages.

In some cases translation proved to be a challenge. Given that especially outside of the capital, many respondents have not had access to formal education, some of the terms used to express the notions being explored were difficult to convey. I invested significant effort with my various translators to identify appropriate terminology. For example, in Taposa language, the translator could not determine an effective translation of

⁵² These percentages are only indicative as such categorisations often merged. For example, should former FACA hiding from the Séléka be considered as civilian or military?

'human rights'. In such cases, issues were explored through associated ideas as opposed to focusing on the nominal component.

The semi-structured interviews followed a range of themes including perceptions of the general situation and anticipated trends; analysis of the greatest threats and perceptions of vulnerability; perceptions about the perpetrators and their motives; senses of the consequences of the consequences of exposure to these threats; conceptions of the notion of protection and human rights; analysis of protective mechanisms and how they function; auto-protection mechanisms; and responsibilities regarding solutions.⁵³

2.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis asks if globally articulated protection norms actually make a difference for individuals who most need them to deliver on their promise. It comprises eight chapters. Chapters one and two seek to illustrate the tensions within which the argument is positioned. The first set of tensions is that which exists between aspirations and concrete action. The global vision is largely aspirational, the inadequacies of which are exposed when juxtaposed against the concrete lived realities of violence in FPZs. The second set of tensions is captured in the contrast between macro versus micro perspectives. Given that the global protection vision and regime itself are constructed in the global space, they draw on numerous macro level assumptions that simply do not correlate with micro level realities. While this undermines the feasibility of the global vision being translated into the micro space, more important is the lack of problematizing of the actual global-to-local translation process.

Taking the state as largely 'unproblematic', the state-centric protection vision largely assumes that once socialised, the state has both the will and the capacity to translate these globally articulated ideational norms into the local spaces. When contrasted with insights from the micro perspective, many of these assumptions are quickly dismantled. As such, chapter two then sketches the protection regime that has emerged.

Given that the global protection regime presents protection as a top-down state-centric venture, chapter three and four explore protection as 'law'; and protection as 'physical security' as the two most likely global-to-local trajectories through which the global protection vision is translated into the local spaces. Unsurprisingly, these translation efforts prove to be significant failures, due largely to the reliance on state institutions. The chapter following then explores protection rearticulated as the 'humanitarian imperative',

⁵³ A more detailed outline of these themes is available in the annex.

which constructed around non-state civil society as primary protectors, is presented by some as an alternative channel through which globally articulated norms can be translated into concrete protection in FPZs. However, the impact proves to be little more than solidarity, which is a thin translation of global promise of protection.

What becomes painfully obvious is that people at risk in FPZs are all too often left to protect themselves. Chapters six and seven thus look at the fact that protection is regularly reduced to so-called auto-protective responses, in which people at risk themselves attempt to devise means to avoid, cope with, or sometimes even confront the threats they meet in their local environment. However, sticking with the global assumption that protection is inherently a top-down 'delivered' process, chapter six specifically looks at 'auto-protection' as 'resilience', which, despite being a micro-level initiative that extends from the inherent capacity of people at risk to 'struggle-well' in the face of adversity, is nevertheless framed within the global protection regime, as a macro level initiative. However, closer analysis exposes this as shameless co-opting by global protection architects of the raw resilience of people at risk and their desire to stay alive as a new articulation of the global promise of protection.

Despite efforts on the part of the global protection regime to present this romanticized notion of resilience and self-reliance as a viable protection alternative, the complex set of local strategies most often prove to be profoundly inadequate vis-à-vis the dramatic power differentials that characterise the relationship between an armed actor perpetrating violence against an unarmed individual. As such, in terms of translation of the global protection vision, which at a minimum is about shielding people at risk from imminent threats, this adds little.

Finally, chapter seven looks at the consequences of repeated protection failures and the potential this generates for perpetuating new dynamics of violence. In the absence of the state, the politics of protection that unfold in the local spaces of FPZs are dramatically different than those envisioned by the global protection regime. People at risk themselves face-off directly with a wide variety of armed actors who intentionally target these individuals. With avoidance and tolerance constituting the core tactics, the auto-protection potential is quickly exhausted. Individuals are regularly overwhelmed by the deadly power inequities that characterise on-going situations of armed violence. Moreover, locally constructed social norms, being adapted to the dire circumstances of FPZs, allow for a greater tolerance of the use of violence. In this, offensive violence often emerges as the 'auto-protection' mechanisms of preference. This in itself has the potential to seep into the macro realm, directly exacerbating the broad dynamics of the armed conflict.

CHAPTER 3 : Protection as Law

'From what I am seeing, human rights do not exist at all'
(1M, National Staff NPA, Bentiu, Aug 07).

3.1 Introduction

For those who are convinced that the macro view and more specifically, the norm diffusion model reflects how protection works, the ever-expanding normative framework is taken as an indication of direct protection advancements. However, the previous chapters demonstrate that “fragile protection zones” exhibit some of the most difficult protection challenges on the planet. Thus, while protection norms that exist only in ideational form are not to be dismissed, these aspirations offer little in terms of immediate and tangible protection against the imminent deadly threats that unfold in FPZs. So the question remains: are these ‘advancing norms’ a match for the ‘worsening realities’?

The formal trajectories through which global protection norms are most likely to be translated from their global ideational form into concrete protective impact in local spaces is that of law and physical security. However, acknowledging the fact that ideas don’t always translate easily into concrete reality (Mosse 2006, p.940; Wilson 2007, p.357), the challenge of translating ideational global norms into a concrete impact in FPZs is clear. Can they really penetrate into these zones and deliver the promise of protection to those who most need it?

The state-centric global protection vision assumes this translation occurs through functioning state institutions, relying primarily on the so-called ‘security sector’ which entails those institutions authorized to use force; their civil management and oversight bodies; justice and law enforcement institutions; and non-state defence forces and civil society institutions (Ball 2002, p.2; Bearne *et al.* 2005, p.iii). However, the infeasibility of this was particularly well illustrated in CAR as the Séléka progressively imposed themselves as the *de facto* authorities.

As discussed earlier, Séléka’s arrival prompted the collapse of formal institutions. Nevertheless, despite their contradicting roles of protector and threatener, Séléka elements were quick to insert themselves into key state institutions including the Police, Gendarmerie and the Judiciary. Perceiving these new ‘authorities’ as illegitimate, respondents were all too aware of the profound contradictions. Indeed, the emergent security and judicial systems were largely seen as arbitrary and dangerous, with a local religious leader stating that ‘now there is no justice here; their system is not concerned with rights or justice, they just want money; they do not respect rights’ (1M&1F, Pastor Epistolique, Ndele, Mar 11).

This was illustrated in one case in which a woman reportedly called the Séléka to complain about what she considered to be criminal activities of a boy who she claimed had cheated her on a repair she paid him to do on her cell-phone. The Séléka subsequently arrived on the scene – which in effect was on the side of the street and was focused around a rickety little kiosk smaller than a telephone booth. Putting the notion of proportional use of force into question, some eight fully armed Séléka elements proceeded to confiscate (ie: loot) all the materials from the little kiosk. Putting all notions of judicial procedures in question, they then proceeded to arrest and beat the young boy; also arresting an additional twelve individuals who happened to be in the vicinity of the kiosk – located on the side of a busy street. Taking all those arrested to their nearby base, the Séléka released those arrested only after each one paid a so-called ‘fine’, or what people in the environment systematically refer to as a ‘ransom fee’. In the face of such experiences, respondents repeatedly lamented that ‘they can do what they want; there is no justice here’ (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11). In this light, this chapter specifically looks at how global protection norms translated as law provide concrete protection for people living the experience of violence in FPZs, or indeed fail to do so.

3.1.1 Protection as law

For many, law is the primary means of translating globally articulated protection norms into a concrete protection impact in local spaces. This is emphasized by UNSG Ban Ki-moon’s particular enthusiasm for the ‘unprecedented progress’ made during recent decades in both international law and legal institutions (2011; see also: ICRC 2013b, p.2). In this view, protection and human rights are seen as intimately entwined, with both being embedded in law, with a widely referenced operational definition describing protection as ‘all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law’ (Giossi Caverzasio 2001; see also: GPCWG 2010, p.7; IASC 1999, p.1; ICRC 2013c, p.59).

The first chapter makes the point that the global protection vision is constructed around the ‘imaginary state’, which is presumed to be capable, legitimate and representative (Call 2008, p.11; Ghani & Lockhart 2009, p.22; Hironaka 2008, p.54; Lakoff 1991, p.1991). Providing social order and stability, constituent parts of this state are expected to include authoritative institutions, infrastructure, and essential services (Hansen & Stepputat 2001, p.2). Tying this more specifically to the idea of protection as law, Migdal emphasizes that this ‘ideal state’ is more specifically expected and/or imagined to rule ‘through rational law’ with the establishment of the rule of law being one of its central roles (2001, p.14; see also: Vincent 2010, p.3).

As discussed in the first chapter, the norm diffusion process, which unfolds in the global space, often culminating in a state signing an international treaty. While ratification affords the signatory a 'socially acceptable' image in the global environment, this same state can easily continue to disregard critical protection norms within its own domestic environment (Axelrod 1986, p.1108; Hathaway 2007, pp.596–7; Krasner 1999, p.32). In recognition that such ratification does not necessarily translate into concrete protection results (Khagram *et al.* 2002, p.14; Moravcsik 2000, p.217; ICRC 2013c), many have turned to the notion of protection as law as the vehicle for pushing this top-down translation process deeper into the domestic sphere.

With many agreeing that ultimately respect of human rights is best ensured through national law (ICISS 2001, p.14; see also: OHCHR 2013c), the UNSG has systematically reiterated the need for international standards to be 'embodied in national legislation' as a means strengthening the rule of law' in the domestic environment (2009b, p.11; see also ICRC 2011). This begins to frame the assertion that improved laws equate with protection.

Reflecting a trend towards so-called legal positivism,⁵⁴ Hirschl observes that the conception of rights as 'legal rights' is rapidly gaining primacy (2000, p.1061). Suggesting that the main goal of the human rights movement is to translate moral values into 'concrete legal rights' (2002, p.27), Orend says it is the process of making human rights "real" in the sense of translating moral ideals into 'guaranteed' legal protection, that animates many human rights activists today (2002, p.27; see also: Wilson 2007, p.351). Indeed, Speed suggests that this view has led to rights being understood as existing 'only when a pre-established legal rule provides an individual an entitlement enforceable by law' (2007, p.171; see also: Orend 2002, p.34).

With the human rights field now being 'one of the most heavily legalized areas of international relations' (Hafner-Burton 2013, p.7; see also: Hopgood 2013, p.ix), rights and more broadly protection are thus seen as inextricably tied to law. Although this inadvertently leads to assumptions that 'only those rights that have been effectively codified into law count as real and legitimate' (Orend 2002, p.74), it also generates the assumption that these codified rights protect. Indeed, the enthusiasm behind 'legal positivism' is driven by the pervasive myth that 'rights, once established in law, exist' (Speed 2007, p.171). This is demonstrated in Wiles' enthusiasm for the fact that civil and political rights 'have almost universally been promoted to an enforceable status in national law' (Wiles 2006, p.36). Legal codification of rights is seen to equate with concrete protection.

⁵⁴ This builds on what Brown refers to as '*positive law*' (1999, p.104; see also: Hopgood 2013, p.7), and what Hafner-Burton refers to as 'global legalism' (2013, p.10).

This vision of protection as law is obviously deeply tied into the myth of the state, especially focusing on its institutional expression. It is founded on the assumption that when rights become a function of law, the state – as primary duty-bearer – assumes a formal duty associated with these rights (Goodale 2007a, p.7; Speed 2007, p.171; Wilson 2007, p.351). In effect, it perpetuates an ever more highly institutionalized state-centric conception of protection.

Further, although this legal conception of protection is constructed around two core actors: the ‘subject’ who has the rights and entitlements; and the ‘duty-bearer’ against whom these entitlements are claimed (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.3), the proclivity of the global protection regime for adopting a macro perspective keeps the emphasis on the political elite and the prompting of the state to act. This perpetuates the problem of the ‘invisible individual’ discussed earlier. With the ‘subject’ being pushed into the shadows, the end objective of *protection of individuals at risk* is simply presumed (Fierke 2007, p.13) as an ‘*obvious*’ corollary. As the spotlight is not placed on the individual, this end result is not tested. But is that corollary really so obvious? Especially in the micro spaces of FPZs does protection unfold as anticipated through a macro lens?

In order to explore these questions, the first section of this chapter explores protection as law as a top-down state-centric process as seen through a macro lens, contrasting this with micro level insights. In sketching the utter failure of legal institutions, it exposes protection as law as fundamentally aspirational in FPZs – and thus an alarming mismatch in the face of imminent deadly threat, especially when the state takes on the role as primary threatener. It then explores the impact of international humanitarian law (IHL) as the law applied in the chaotic circumstances of FPZs. It then demonstrates how the failure of law to protect in such circumstances has prompted a re-framing of the notion of protection as ‘accountability’. However, as a measure implemented after the fact of the law failing, this reframing contributes little to addressing immediate and urgent protection needs.

3.2 State as Duty-Bearer – The institutional expression

Efforts to operationalise protection are often consumed by the paradox of the indispensability and the unreliability of the state as the central player in the global protection vision. It is widely acknowledged, both in theory and reality, that the state capacity to ensure human rights compliance in such contexts is essentially absent (Baker 2009, p.x; see also: Börzel & Risse 2013, p.66; Fierke 2007, p.43). Nevertheless, a well-recognized operational protection manual emphasizes that ‘no effort should be spared to

remind the primary duty bearers of their responsibilities and make them assume their obligations more fully' (ICRC 2013c, p.47). This section traces the results of these efforts in CAR and South Sudan.

3.2.2 Pre-existing State Incapacity

As discussed in the first chapter, the lack of the state's institutional capacity to protect in both cases was already all too evident even prior to the on-set of acute crises.

3.2.2.1 South Sudan

Exemplifying the myth of the state, the birth of the Republic of South Sudan as the newest state in the world brought almost reflexive expectations that it would now somehow materialise as the 'ideal state', with Kromah for example pointing to expectations that the authorities would work 'to enhance civilian protection and promote a culture of respect with regard to human rights' (2014). However, despite countless norm entrepreneurs reiterating that the new government 'needs to fulfil its responsibility to protect civilians' (HRW 2013c), fundamental state failures to protect were prolific long before the current crisis. As illustrated in chapter one, both the will and the capacity to protect were in dramatically short supply.

More specific to the notion of protection by law, commentators underlined that 'critical gaps in national legislation' undermined the protection results (Amnesty International 2013f; see also: Reeve 2012, p.54). Describing judicial institutions as 'sparse' with 'extremely limited capacity', Reeve argues that it has never 'been within the capacity of the state to deliver justice [or protection] comprehensively or uniformly' (2012, p.45; see also: Almquist Knopf 2013, p.23; Jok *et al.* 2004, p.6; HRW 2015a p.5). Indeed, international observers systematically reported that 'efforts to establish effective rule of law throughout the country have yielded limited results' (UNSG 2013b, p.17; see also UNMISS 2014, p.14).

This was widely corroborated by respondents, with people being deeply sceptical about state-centric protection long before the current crisis. Framing protection as human rights, the government official whom I knew as a NGO liaison during the previous civil war explained to me that now that the SPLA/M is the new government, 'they have not given the people their rights' (1M, Commissioner-Panyiajar, Bentiu, Aug15). Similarly, a national legal advisor working for an INGO added that 'those in the government *don't want to* implement human rights' (1M, natStaff-NPA, Bentiu, Aug07).

Further, given that the people of South Sudan have never experienced the benefits of a functional state, they do not naturally rely upon it. As explored in the first chapter, while respondents vaguely agreed that it is somehow for the government to protect them,

many immediately added that this does not happen. For example, a group of women located in one of the historically most violent areas of the country reported that 'they are not protecting us' (14F,open-space-IDPs,Rumbek,Nov03). After describing the various independent protection mechanisms they have developed in order to avoid the on-going violence in their area, another large group of women in the same area agreed that 'protection [from the state] is not there' (12F,by-airstrip,Rumbek,Nov04).

To some degree this is because people don't know the system. As the above government official stated, 'people don't know who they are supposed to talk to for their rights' (1M, Guy,Pactwkshp,Bentiu,Aug14). The same INGO staff member added that 'people don't know where to go or what to do to claim their rights; so they just have to sit and wait' (1M,natStaff NPA,Bentiu,Aug07). However, illustrating Hopgood's observation that 'there is nothing self-evident about the meaning of human rights at all' (2006, p.215), he added more fundamentally that 'people don't know what their rights are' (1M,natStaff-NPA,Bentiu,Aug07). Respondents widely agreed with this, indicating that 'the majority of people have *heard* of human rights; but most don't know what the content is' (5F,women,Bor,Oct08).

Individuals working for NGOs proved to be particularly informed on this, with one young man who had been a former child soldier and who was now a human rights animator for an INGO stating that 'people know about human rights, but they don't really understand what they mean, especially in the rural area' (1M,IntersosNatStaff, Pariang,Aug09). While noting that 'it has been announced on the radio that there are now human rights' two young women washing clothes together with their elderly mother, pointed to their minimalist circumstances and added that 'we have not seen them' (3F, young-women with mother,Rumbek,Sept20).

Reiterating that 'we heard of human rights over the radio' a woman who had not had a chance at formal education but demonstrated a strong intuitive sense of what human rights are, explained that 'people talk of human rights, but most are like me, they don't really know any details' (1F,Woman-in-Raja,Sept11). A subsistence farmer who was desperately trying to understand what rights are equally stated that 'I have heard of them on the radio; but I have not heard any details' (1M,Subsistence-farmer,nearWau,Sept13). Even a group of men who were serving as the advisory council for their local chief agreed that 'we normally hear about human right, but we don't really know what they are' (5M, Wau/Bagari,Sept07).

Thus, even prior to the on-set of the current crisis in South Sudan, the operationalisation of human rights was recognised as minimal, with a women's rights

activist indicating that 'human rights are there, but they are not practiced' (2F,women's CBO,Wau,Sept05). A very elderly man who served his community as a Chief and a member of the customary court sitting under a large tree with his chair and little table that served as his 'office' stated that 'we have heard that there is something called human rights; we know that they are there; but this is not being implemented here' (1M,Old chief, Wau,Sept06).

Importantly, Merry observes that people who are just learning about their rights are less likely to seize them if the state fails to deliver on their claims (2005, p.217). Indeed, even before the current crisis, a local observer described an utter lack of confidence in this 'new system', stating that 'justice is not up to date in South Sudan; so few people seek legal means when there is a problem' (1M,natStaff,Rumbek,Nov03). Another similarly concluded that 'people don't use the new system; they don't even try to make it work' (1F, INGOstaff,Juba,Oct01).

Getting at the underpinnings of this, Merry notes that for protection as law to function in such contexts, people need to re-envision themselves as 'entitled to protection by the state' (2005, p.188). However, many were unconvinced of any sense of entitlement with a women's leader observing that 'some people think human rights belong to the white people, especially women's rights; we don't have them here' (1F,women's-group,Rumbek, Sept26).

Thus, as Merry says, it makes no sense to assume that people would rely on a system that has never delivered for them (2005, p.188). Illustrating this all too clearly, a local legal advisor for another INGO in the same village as above added that 'most people laugh when we tell them they can use the new system; when we tell people that if someone offends you, you don't need to take the law into your own hands they laugh' (1M, INGOstaff,Rumbek,Sept25).

Indeed, although some optimistically agreed that 'human rights are there; they are not fully accomplished, but we are somehow on the way' (1M,SSRRC,Raja,Sept10), most respondents were far more sceptical. For example, a group of women who were preparing food together pointed to their elderly blind mother who was very thin and weather-beaten as yet another example, asserting that 'we just don't see them making a difference' (4F, women cracking-gnuts,Rumbek,Sept21). One of the INGO national staff members working on these issues himself concluded that 'these rights exist in theory, but from what I am seeing now, they do not exist at all here' (1M,NatStaffNPA,Bentiu,Aug07).

Unsurprisingly, when it is repeatedly demonstrated that it cannot be defended, 'human rights law loses its credibility' (OHCHR 2005, p.9). Reflecting observations by

Csete and Kippenberg that victims see the futility of making complaints (2002, p.80), a women's leader reported that 'people don't seek justice because they know the authorities don't apply human rights' (2F, Women's-rights-CBO2,Wau,Sept05). In this sense, another one of the INGO national legal advisors underlined that 'state laws have no consequences at the local level; there is no respect for state courts or even state law itself' thus concluding that 'people do not trust state institutions' (1M,INGOnatStaff,Jonglei,Oct02).

As the security situation degenerated, this pessimism was consolidated with three elderly men reflecting on their sense of impotence, concluding all too precisely that 'when there is no right to live, then human rights are not there' (3M,old-men,near-Afex,Rumbek, Sept26). Although the circumstances in CAR are obviously different having been an independent state since 1961, the lived experiences of protection by law were not all that different.

3.2.2.2 Central African Republic

Being profoundly weak, the state authorities in CAR have long been recognised for failing to protect their citizens. With the 'pronounced absence' of the state outside of the capital being a defining characteristic (Bierschenk & de Sardan 1997, p.441), weak state institutions and widespread impunity have been repeatedly noted. Indeed, describing the infrastructure of law and order as 'devastated' (2007, p.102; see also: Human Rights Council 2009, para.45), in 2007 HRW reported a 'human rights crisis' in CAR (2007, p.12). In 2008 the UNSG described CAR as conflict-ridden and 'characterized by the absence of the rule of law' (2008, para.40). In 2010, Alston reiterated that the state offers virtually no protection for civilians outside of Bangui (2010, p.4). At the point of the on-set of the Séléka crisis in December 2012, Amnesty International emphasized that '[n]one of the country's previous governments has ever delivered fair and impartial justice' (2013c, p.6; see also: Alston 2010, p.6; Mattioli-Zeltner 2015; UNSG 2007, p.8; USG 2011, p.3).

As such, it is unsurprising that as in South Sudan, many respondents in CAR doubted that human rights had an added value in their context. Firstly, with a staff of a national NGO explaining that 'human rights are something new here; people are just beginning to know about them' (1M,EmileJupadec-Animateur,Zemio,Jan08), it is apparent that human rights are seen to be as new as they are in South Sudan. Another man from within the same community agreed that 'here, this is something new' (1M,sick-man,Zemio,Dec18).

Demonstrating a similar lack of ownership of these so-called 'universal' rights, some respondents were convinced that 'these rights come from the whites' (10F,Christ-laughing, Ndele,Mar16). Others more specifically stated that 'human rights are for the

white people' (1F NGO nat-staff, Ndele, Mar11). Being one of few women speaking French in the rural areas of CAR, the elder wife of a very influential local community leader agreed with this, explaining that 'we hear of women's rights and child's rights on the radio; but here women have nothing like rights; you can listen but it does nothing for us; that is what other women have; but here there are no such rights; even people say that children have rights, but not here' (1F, MamaYagouda, Boguila, Dec07).

In this light, a religious leader located in a deeply rural area stressed that 'you have to be able to understand human rights before you will have them' (2M, ChurchRep, Bonasse, Nov30). Thus, as seen in South Sudan, it was equally widely noted that 'many people know of the idea of human rights, but not the details' (2F&1M, Gbafio, Aug01). A young woman in the same village as above described having once seen a book that explained rights. As such, while agreeing that people had probably heard of human rights, she again added that 'we don't know the details' (1F, Young-French-speaking, Boguila, Dec 02). With respondents widely indicating that 'I have heard of these ideas but don't know them deeply' (1M, IDP-native, Zemio, Jan10); or 'I have not mastered these ideas' (1M, IDP Site-C, Zemio, Jan09), another well-educated French speaking woman from the above village equally concluded that 'most people here don't understand human rights' (2F, older French-speaking, Boguila, Dec02).

Especially in Bangui, better informed respondents speculated that this lack of understanding of human rights penetrates deeply into the formal structures. For example, the elderly gentleman who had received legal training in Paris some years earlier and who was now hiding from the Séléka in a peripheral quartier of Bangui emphasised that 'even the intellectuals don't know what human rights are; people don't know about these things here; even those who went to school don't really know' (1M, Legal-advisor, Gbafio, Aug01). Agreeing with this claim, a very dynamic and well-educated young woman with whom I worked extensively explained that 'we don't really know what they actually are; when we talk about people having rights, even I myself with a university degree have not mastered what this really means; we don't understand this here' (1F, Fuligen, internal, Bangui, Aug09).

The apparent confusion is due, at least to some extent, to the stark contradictions between human rights rhetoric and their lived experiences. Although 'the principle of universality is the cornerstone' of the global protection system (Hafner-Burton 2013, p.xv), the harsh realities make it very difficult for people within these FPZs to make sense of the contradictions.

For example even before the on-set of the Séléka crisis, one of the French speaking woman from the above northern town poetically claimed that 'justice is only

injustice here', complaining that people had no real legal recourse (1F,French-speaking,Boguilla,Dec02). In this light, a woman who I met in the same village, but who having been educated in Bangui was relatively versed on human rights added that 'when people don't see the importance of human rights, they don't have an interest in them' (1F,FishLady-fromBangui,Boguila,Dec09). Thus, as indicated in South Sudan, people in CAR can equally not be expected to engage with a system that does not necessarily promise to deliver concrete added value.

This was even more distinct in the south-easterly part of the country affected by the LRA. Underlining that 'justice *should* be an element of life' an internationally travelled local Pastor explained that 'here there is nowhere where people can go to complain; the police and the military don't function' (1M,Pastor,Mboki,Jan19). An energetic local youth leader from the same village who was eager to find ways to help people move forward positively despite the persistent security problems, equally agreed that 'there is no law here' (1M, IDP-youth-leader,Mboki,Jan21). As such, people's expectations of protection by law were minimal.

At the on-set of the Séléka crisis, before the Bozizé regime was fully toppled, people caught up in the early stages of violence equally expressed little confidence in the formal protective system. A group of three local CdQ from Ndele, one of the northern villages first occupied by the Séléka, speculated that 'the state cannot regulate security problems' (3M,CdQ,Christians,Ndele,Mar13). The former civil servants from the same village who had been forced to seek protection in the IDP camp situated next to a peacekeeper's base equally lamented the fact that 'our state does nothing to protect us' (3M,GovFunct IDPsFomac;Ndele,Mar14).

These local realities shed a particular light on Hafner-Burton's observation that the global system 'corresponds well with protecting human rights only in special circumstances – generally in the settings where the worst human rights abuses are least likely to occur' (2013, p.4). Despite there being no way of escaping the fact that protection by law relies on functional institutions (Call 2007, pp.396-7; Mahony & Nash 2012, p.9; OHCHR & CESR 2013, p.11), the global protection regime, through its socialization efforts, continued to try to prompt state will to comply with 'appropriate behaviour', while assuming the institutional capacity is in place.

Indeed, despite the very awkward contrast with the progressive collapse of institutions that accompanied the on-set of armed crises in both South Sudan and CAR, this period in CAR particularly saw norm entrepreneurs scale-up their discursive efforts, calling on the authorities to better respect their legal obligations to protect. For example,

some two months into the crisis (just prior to Séléka's actual overthrow of President Bozizé), UNSC Resolution 2088 reiterated '*concern* at the lack of State authority outside the capital', while '*underscoring*' the primary responsibility of the GoCAR to 'maintain law and order, promote security and protect the civilian population', and ensure 'full respect for the rule of law, human rights, and applicable international humanitarian law' (2013d, para.10). Despite the improbability of calling on state authorities facing a crushing rebel attack to do something that they had never formerly achieved, the global protection effort nevertheless consisted largely of such socialization efforts.

Similarly at the on-set of the crisis in South Sudan, HRW for example called on the GoSS to take 'urgent steps to prevent further abuses against civilians and quickly deescalate rising ethnic tensions' (2013d) as though both the will and capacity to do so existed and it was only this reminder that was missing. Seemingly by rote, the UNSC reiterated over a series of resolutions that 'the Government of South Sudan bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory' (2014b, p.1; 2014c, p.1). Insistent reminders that 'states are responsible under international human rights law to guarantee the protection and preservation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at all times' (UNMISS 2014, p.11) were repeatedly articulated.

However, at the same time, international experts, often the same ones who were making the above assertions, equally acknowledged that what were already profoundly weak state structures, had collapsed into total disarray with the on-set of these acute crises (Boukaert 2014; ICG 2013b, p.1; OHCHR 2013b, p.6; Vircoulon & Lesueur 2014). Specific to the functioning of protection by law, Amnesty International reported that 'South Sudan's justice system, which already faced numerous limitations, has ground to a halt' in the areas affected by the conflict (2014b, p.46; see also: OHCHR 2015, p.10; UNSG 2015, p.12). Similarly in CAR, external analysts described systematic destruction of the judicial system due to repeated 'looting and plundering' and devastation of infrastructure (UNSG 2013e, p.6; see also: OHCHR 2014b, p.9), reporting 'a rapid breakdown in law and order resulting from the absence of civilian administration and of defence and police forces' (2013d, p.6; see also: FCO-UK 2014, p.5; UNSG 2013a, p.6). This spotlights the utter disconnect between the global vision of protection and its concrete translation – a disconnect that simply could not have been unknown.

While OHCHR stresses that protection 'ultimately depends on effective institutions' (2005, p.9; see also: Brown 1999, p.106), the breakdown of precisely these institutions is all too evident. Indeed, this was particularly vivid in CAR where, as discussed earlier, the Séléka systematically targeted civil servants, both as a general anti-government initiative,

as well as ‘settling of scores’. OHCHR themselves particularly reported attacks ‘against magistrates and lawyers by the Séléka in retaliation for past verdicts and lawsuits’ (2013d, p.6; OHCHR 2014b, p.9; UNSG 2013c, p.7) which consolidated the utter collapse of state protective institutions. As discussed in chapter one, countless respondents lamented the fact that ‘all state functionaries have fled’ (4F,DRC-CPF,Kabo,Feb05); and that ‘the government is no longer in place’ (4F,Muslims@CdQhouse,Ndele,Mar14). As a local Pastor underlined, ‘we are here without a state’ (1M,PastorEpostolique,Ndele,Mar11).

As such, this tracing of the global-to-local translation process of the notion of protection as law exposes a fundamental disconnect, reflecting Hafner-Burton’s observation that the human rights legal system is ‘almost powerless to put its own aspirations into practice’ (2013, p.xvi). In the face of this dramatic and growing chasm between expectations and concrete realities, we are left wondering just how the norm entrepreneurs expect their urgent reminders of obligations to protect are to be realised.

Nevertheless, to this point, these disconnects are largely related to dysfunctional *institutional expression* of the state. However, as discussed in chapter one, overt conflict crises in FPZs are characterised by not only the lack of will to protect, but also the will to proactively threaten. Thus, the difficulties of translating protection by law in FPZs are exponentially compounded when the state protective apparatus doubles a party to the conflict.

3.2.3 State as ‘Threatener’

As the acuity of these FPZs escalated, protection by law was rendered ever-more infeasible, confronting the fact that ‘rights established in law are functionally non-existent precisely because the state refuses to enforce them’ (Speed 2007, p. 187; see also: Ignatieff 2001, pp.18–21; Wilson 2007, p.351). The global protection vision casts the state as the protector. In the case of armed conflict, the state typically doubles as a ‘party to the conflict’. This brings to the fore, the paradox of the state often being both the ‘key promoter and defender of human rights’, and equally ‘the most problematic offender’ of these rights (Vincent 2010, p.5; see also: Fierke 2007, p.14; Maroya 2003, p.283). While this was already evidenced in the dreadful human rights records of security sector actors in both cases even prior to the crisis, it was dramatically compounded in the context of overt armed conflict.

Nevertheless, the global vision doggedly casts armed actors as legally bound ‘duty-bearers’ bearing obligations as ‘protectors’. While this highlights Gould’s contradiction of ‘pledging trust in an entity that is notorious for its unworthiness’ (2005, p.65; see also: Hansen & Stepputat 2001, p.2) in the most dramatic way, this contradiction is simply

papered-over in the global vision of how protection works. However, through a meso lens which recalls Fierke's 'field of relationships' and the fluidity between roles of the 'threatener', the 'threatened', the 'protector', and the 'protected' (2007, p.46; see also: Cohen 2000, p.14), the following looks at the implications of this straddling of the dual roles of 'threatener' and 'protector'.

3.2.3.1 South Sudan

UNMISS tells us that the South Sudan armed conflict crisis was marked by the dramatic failure 'of the Government as well as of the opposition forces to protect civilians from violence' (2014, p.9). However, this indicates a simple passive failure to protect. Being identified as proactive perpetrators of a diversity of 'violations of major concern', it was equally widely noted that 'both parties to the conflict have been responsible for ethnically targeted attacks on civilians' (UNSG 2014b, p.7; see also: FIDH 2014b, p.5; OHCHR 2015, p.1). This emphasizes their role of proactive threateners.

Even the UN Security Council agreed that much of the violence is 'caused by the country's political and military leaders' (2014e, p.1). With a series of resolutions issued between May 2014 to March 2015 systematically '*stressing*' the responsibility 'borne by all parties to the conflict for the suffering of the people of South Sudan' (2014e, pp.1–2; 2014a, p.2; 2015, p.1), the duty-bearers, legally bound as 'protectors', were equally identified as primary 'threateners'. Nevertheless, from the macro perspective, this is seen as an aberration, with Amnesty International for example, reporting that 'the parties [to the conflict] have completely disregarded their human rights obligations, as well as the rules of international humanitarian law that are designed to limit the harmful and destructive effects of armed conflict' (2014b, p.51). The global protection regime sees these actors firstly in the role of protector.

Respondents on the receiving end of the violence were all too aware of this contradiction, especially in Unity State, where the largely Nuer population was presumed to be sympathetic to the opposition. While describing some truly horrific experiences of being constantly on the run with her children, being relentlessly pursued through bush and swamps by armed troops who were apparently shooting directly at them, a woman who I found now seeking refuge in the UNMISS protection of civilians (PoC) camp in the capital of Unity State, Bentiu, clearly stated that 'the government is killing us' (1F, Inside-tukal, Bentiu-PoC, Nov23). A national staff member of an INGO located in a rural village that had itself been repeatedly attacked by government troops agreed that 'our President is killing the innocents' (1M, NatStaff, Koch, Dec07). As an elder Nuer man who had been appointed within the Bor PoC site in the neighbouring state as the head of the traditional

justice system stated, 'the President is the one who ordered the government troops to kill all Nuer' (1M,Justice,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

Unsurprisingly, the fact that state actors simultaneously embody the utterly contradictory roles of 'protector' and 'threatener' poses a critical challenge for the global protection vision. For example, while agreeing that 'Government security forces have continued to harass and attack Nuer', HRW argued that in failing to take action to prevent such civilian attacks 'South Sudan's government has effectively condoned attacks on Nuer civilians' (2014d, p.3). But of course the problem is far more active than that. Having split in two, the national military now constituted the bulk of the two parties to the conflict. The President of the state was at the same time the leader of one of the parties to the conflict. And as noted above, the central strategy of both sides was the targeting of civilians sympathetic to the opposing side.

Recalling the tragic day on which the crisis erupted, a community representative who had been forced to flee to one of the UNMISS PoC sites that was established in Juba in order to save his life explained with extreme agitation, 'it was the military who started killing the people; the military is the same as the government; they killed civilians' (1M, com-rep,Juba-PoC,Oct30).

Within these horrible realisations, while the global vision stubbornly maintains its aspirations of state-centric protection, people caught up the crisis struggled to make sense of contradictions between the global promise of protection and the experience of being on the receiving end of on-going civilian-targeted violence. A group of women who were trying to find a solution for the little boy of one of them who was very ill apparently with malaria stressed that 'we have heard of human rights; we know that everyone has a right to live; we know those ones have no right to kill us' (6F,malaria-child,Rumbek,Nov05). Accentuating the vulnerability of unarmed civilians, a women who had delivered a baby only two weeks earlier concluded that 'we know we have a right to live; but what is happening now; these ones are humiliating our rights; those who have the power are taking our rights away' (2F,new-baby,Leer,Oct23).

Indeed, as the crisis progressed, peoples' sense of entitlement to rights, as weak as it was, rapidly eroded. Arguing that 'human rights can only be there if they are not violated by others' two women who were reflecting on the repeated attacks by the various armed groups on their village stated with exasperation that 'this crisis is a violation of human rights; these ones are now taking our human rights away' (2F,frustrated,Leer,Oct 25). Taking this further, a well-educated young women hiding in a deeply rural area

concluding that ‘now we are in war; people are not thinking if they have rights or not; we know for this moment human rights do not exist’ (1F,trans,Leer,Oct25).

Having fled even further into a rural area where people relied on a wide reaching swamp as their main means of protection, a group of women who were comparing their current plight to the previous civil war agreed that ‘now again we have only war; there are no rights here now’ (6F,IDPs@school,Ganyiel,Nov13). Building on Amnesty International’s observation that ‘civilian law enforcement is virtually absent’ (2014b, p.27), a group of Nuer men who had fled from a predominantly Dinka village into the UNMISS PoC-site in Bor explained that ‘once people realized it [the violence] was for them; they realized that the government will not protect them’ (6M,Bor-PoC,Dec13). Caught within this deadly contradiction, people vested little merit in the aspirations of the global protection vision.

Nevertheless, despite this micro level clarity, norm entrepreneurs pressed on with their above described socialization efforts. Indeed, some advocacy efforts in this very acute period even more bizarrely focused on the promotion of international treaties. For example, in what appears to be an astoundingly untimely initiative, one year into the South Sudan crisis, which continued to hot up, various norm entrepreneurs prioritized calls for the GoSS to complete the ‘accession process’ on various international human rights conventions. In defence of this, Amnesty International explained that ‘we believe that becoming a state party to these treaties could offer South Sudanese a source of hope’ (2014c; see also: OHCHR 2015, p.7; UNMISS 2015b; UNSG 2015, p.11). Nevertheless, as convoluted as the straddling of the dual roles of perpetrator and protector was in South Sudan, it was even more so in CAR.

3.2.3.2 Central African Republic

As discussed earlier, the collapse of Bozizé regime in the very early phase of the CAR crisis led to the Séléka, as the primary ‘threateners’ to be quickly re-imagined by external observers as at least *de facto* authorities. Although the Séléka’s seizure of power was initially condemned as illegal and the authority of Michel Djotodia as the new (self-proclaimed) President was initially denied (African Union 2013a, para.6–8; African Union 2013c; UN Security Council 2013d, p.212; UNSG 2013a, para.7–21), reflecting what Brooks refers to as a ‘collective inability to think beyond the paradigm of statehood’ (2005, p.1189), the Séléka as ‘threatener’ was nevertheless quickly reframed as the ‘protector’ in the global imagination.

Despite having been depicted as rag-tag opportunistic armed actors fully embodying the role of the ‘threatener’, once installed at the state level, the global narrative rapidly recreated the Séléka as ‘de facto government forces’ (Amnesty International

2013c, p.1; see also: FIDH 2014a, p.7; ICC 2014a, p.22). In this, the global protection effort fixed their socialization efforts on transforming this ‘threatener’ into a ‘protector’. With surprising simplicity, contextual realities were simply reframed to conform with the global vision of how protection works.

Despite their continuing in the role as *the* primary ‘threatener’, the Séléka was legally reconstituted as the primary ‘protector’ with OHCHR identifying it as the legally bound duty-bearer asserting that ‘following its seizure of power on 24 March 2013, the Séléka assumed civil and military responsibilities’ (2013c, p.18; see also: UNSG 2013d, p.18).

In this, the transnational norm entrepreneurs barely missed a beat in their assertions that the ‘authorities bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians’ (UN Security Council 2013e). Tellingly, while the January 2013 UN Resolution 2088 targeting President Bozizé’s regime *underscored* ‘the primary responsibility of the Central African authorities to protect the population’ while at the same time *stressing* ‘their obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law’, (2013d, p.3), the October 2013 Resolution 2121, some nine months later, used exactly the same language but targeted ‘President’ Djotodia’s Séléka regime. The only difference was that the Séléka leadership had supplanted Bozizé as the so-called ‘authorities’.

With the global vision of how protection was going to work remaining stubbornly fixed, the presumed successful reframing Séléka as ‘protector’ led to countless calls for this new ‘*government*’ to ‘publicly and fully commit to respect international humanitarian law’ (ICG 2013a). They were to show this commitment ‘by investigating and prosecuting attacks by Séléka troops against civilians’ and more generally reflecting the institutional emphasis, by working to ‘restore law and order’ and to ‘reinstate institutions in the entire territory’ (HRW 2013a; see also: Amnesty International 2014a, p.6; ICG 2013a).

Despite building on what was the utter collapse of what had at best been a profoundly inadequate state protection apparatus prior to the crisis, while institutional incapacity was acknowledged, the problem was seen largely as a lack of will to restore these institutions. From that perspective, these international protection experts reported that CAR was ‘sinking into anarchy’ (ICG 2013b, p.3; see also: OHCHR 2013b, p.8; UNSG 2013a, p.9).⁵⁵ Other emphasised ‘a total breakdown in law and order, and the absence of the rule of law’ (UN Security Council 2013e; see also: ICC 2014a, p.20; UNSG 2013a, p.9; UNSG 2013d, p.6). Nevertheless, HRW called on the Séléka to ‘publicly declare’ that they as the new *government* ‘does not tolerate attacks on civilians and will bring to justice those

⁵⁵ UN Resolution 2127 (December 2013) acknowledged the inability of the existing policing and justice institutions to uphold the rule of law (UNSC 2013c, para.14–15; see also: ICG 2013b, p.6).

responsible for pillage, murder, rape, and other serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law' (HRW 2013a). Moreover, the UNSG stressed the priority 'to quickly restore public order and security throughout the country and to protect civilians from abuses of all sorts' (UN Secretary-General 2013c, p.4).

In its most benign, this approach completely ignored the institutional collapse. But of course the protection crisis was in no way benign. It was unfolding within what continued to be an acutely violent armed conflict. This wishful reframing by norm entrepreneurs of the Séléka as 'protectors' stood in very awkward interface with the fact that they simultaneously and indeed far more robustly occupied the role of primary 'threateners'. Their persistent violent activities forced norm entrepreneurs into convoluted knots as they grappled with the fundamental paradox of the primary protector preferring its role as primary threatener. While analysts agreed that 'the wanton violence of the Séléka forces, especially after they had taken power, discredited the newly installed Djotodia regime' (Muna 2014, p.14; see also: HRW 2013a), the state-centric global protection vision is nevertheless constructed on the core assertion that this same state bears the primary duty to protect the citizens of CAR.

Thus, despite continually reporting on the 'horrific abuses' of Séléka as 'threatener', norm entrepreneurs could do little more than repeatedly 'remind' the Djotodia *government* that it 'has an obligation to control the rebels who brought it to power, to prevent abuses, and punish those who commit them' (HRW 2013a; see also: UN Security Council 2013f). However, it is widely observed that governments often 'lack the means to control their own enforcement agencies' (Börzel & Risse 2013, p.64). And this was exceptionally salient at this point in CAR, with President Djotodia being widely recognised as having little or no control over the Séléka forces (FCO-UK 2014; ICG 2013b, p.6).⁵⁶

Indeed, being seen as disorganized and lacking a unified command structure, it was widely reported that even local level Séléka leaders had little control over individual Séléka elements (African Union 2013b, p.5; Aljazeera 2013a; UNSG 2013a, para.34). Acknowledging this, the International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) point out that in those cases where leadership has little control over its forces, protection efforts that focus on the leadership 'are unlikely to be effective in stopping abuses' (2000, p.21). Being all too aware of this, the people at risk who were sharing their micro spaces with these armed actors were deeply sceptical of the purported transformation of the Séléka from 'threatener' into 'protector' as explored in the next section.

⁵⁶ President Djotodia's September 2013 decision to dissolve the Séléka (UNSG 2013d, para.28) had no meaningful impact on the level of violence, with the now-called 'ex-Séléka' continuing their exactions (Amnesty International 2014a, p.7; HRW 2013f, p.5; ICG 2013b, p.3).

Transforming the Séléka - as experienced by people at risk

Agreeing that 'war severely damages the mechanisms of formal justice delivery in as much as they ever existed in rural areas', Baker adds that where these mechanisms survive, they are typically 'dysfunctional, inaccessible, or lacking credibility' (2009a, p.91). This was particularly evident in CAR, where repeated calls by norm entrepreneurs for the Séléka to 'reconstitute basic government structures and institutions' and restore the rule of law (Amnesty International 2014a, p.6; see also: HRW 2013a; ICG 2013a) facilitated their fairly rapid insinuation into the state protective apparatus across the country.

However in the micro spaces, this was met with a sense of exasperation with many respondents complaining that 'they have taken all the government posts; they have installed themselves as the de facto government' (1M,PastorEpostoliqueNdele,Mar11). In lamenting the fact that 'the Séléka now play the role of the Police, Gendarmerie and the tribunal' (2M,advisors-CdQ,Ngaragba,Aug05), countless people doubted that this so-called 'installation' could in any way equate with improved protection.

Seeing the Séléka as 'occupiers', the vast majority of respondents (at least in the first months of the crisis)⁵⁷ deeply resented their 'authority', even if fearfully. For example, while reporting being under a constant and menacing surveillance by Séléka elements because of their connections with the former regime, two former civil servants now working with the Mayor in the northern town of Ndele complained that 'now they dominate us; we are under their management' (2M, Mayors-Office;Ndele,Mar18). A couple of women from the same village who were clearly cowed by the threatening circumstances quietly complained that 'we now live under the orders of the Séléka' (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar 09).

Despite prevailing fear, the so-called 'authority' of the Séléka was bitterly resented, with the two men from above stubbornly asserting that 'these rebels are *not* the legal government; they are *rebels*, they have no authority here' (2M,Mayors-Office;Ndele,Mar 18). Equally complaining about the oppressive behaviour of the Séléka, a community leader in a nearby village similarly asserted that 'the Séléka doesn't have authority here; we don't want them here' (1M,PresSite-B,Kabo,Jan06).

Many Respondents scoffed at the idea that the Séléka could be transformed into their 'protectors'. An elderly but energetic woman who was caring for seven grandchildren because the parents had been forced to flee when the Séléka arrived into their town was very sceptical, stating that 'the Séléka neglects the protection of the population' (1F&2M,

⁵⁷ Importantly, this changed during the second phase of this conflict, when civilian-on-civilian violence played out nominally along religious lines, and the Muslims population turned to the Séléka for physical protection.

Grandma,kids-eating,Kabo5,Feb12). The two civil servants from above agreed that ‘they do not think of human rights; they have no respect for human rights’ (2M,Mayors-Office; Ndele,Mar18).

Indeed, focusing on them primarily as ‘threateners’, the three CdQ who had gathered in a borrowed office to reflect with me on their difficulties particularly resented the fact that ‘they have no respect for us; they continue to do bad things; they treat us badly’ (3M,CdQ-Christians,Ndele,Mar13). Agreeing that ‘our real problems come from these ones with guns’, the fearful group of women who all lived near a newly installed Séléka base articulated the concerns of many when reporting that ‘if they want to beat you, they can; if they want to steal they can; we have no solution to this’ (9F,Christian-bySéléka, Ndele,Mar13).

Nevertheless, in their *de facto* role as ‘protector’, Séléka elements were particularly quick to ‘reconstitute’ a version of the justice system. As OHCHR observed, Séléka elements soon ‘occupied courts, taking the place of judges and prosecutors in a number of prefectures’ (2013b, p.6) – this, despite the irony that former civil servants were forced to flee under their targeted threats. Not missing this irony, another former civil servant caustically observed that ‘now they do the ‘justice’; now they are the ‘judges’” (1M,SG MayorSultan,Ndele,Mar11).

Others underlined the fact that they were utterly ill-equipped to do so, with a smaller group of female Muslims asking somewhat rhetorically ‘how can we take our problems to an illegal force; they don’t understand; they have no legal authority’ (4F, Muslims@CdQhouse,Ndele,Mar14). A group of men who had had parts of their metal fabricating equipment stolen by the Séléka complained that ‘the Séléka have their own law; they do not respect human rights; it is only the law of settling scores; they do what they want’ (5M,artisans,Kolongo-II,July26).

Countless individuals cited cases of extortion, with two young men who had been arrested by the Séléka complained that ‘they will come and arrest you and make you pay a fine to be released’ (2M,Very-Nervous,Guito5,Aug02). As a very agitated group of young adults who had recently suffered a house search on allegations that they were hiding weapons explained, ‘you can just be arrested by Séléka; you can be killed at any time’ (2F &1M,targeted for guns,Kitigba,Aug05).

Describing them as having ‘no discipline’ (2F&1M,retiedFACA,Kitigba,Aug05) and being ‘unpredictable’ (3M,CdQ-Christians,Ndele,Mar13), others added that ‘they just charge people large fines; they have no processes; they do no fair judgement’ (1Mfather &3F,Guito5,Aug02). Indeed, citing many examples of bizarre ‘judicial’ processes (as cited

in the introduction) in which people were randomly accused, arrested, beaten, fined, and sometimes killed, one of the former civil servant from above concluded that 'the Séléka can just take people and beat them; there are no rights; there is no respect' (1M,SGMayor Sultan,Ndele,Mar11).

This was further compounded by shock over frequent mistreatment of their local leaders, with a group of women underlining that 'they torture our chefs; our chefs have no rights with them' (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar09). Indeed, agreeing that 'they have no respect for us' the above mentioned group of CdQ concluded that 'we have no power; we have no force' (3M,CdQ-Christians,Ndele,Mar13).

This description sheds quite a different light on Merry's observation that people trust human rights only when they have institutional support and when that institutional basis is widely accepted (2005, pp.181–188; see also: Agnew 2008, p.179). Being all too aware of the institutional collapse taking place, these 'end-users' of protection by law could not have been more dubious, with countless people concluding that 'now we are without law here' (3F,inside,focal-point,Ndele,Mar16).

Not only had the Séléka failed to restore law and order and provide protection, they had in effect translated their role as 'protector' into yet another source of threat for the people at risk. A wisened elder woman who worked with an INGO and was clearly a matriarchal figure within the community, explained that 'these ones use their guns for every situation; there is nothing we can do against this' (1F,Veron,Ndele,Mar13). Building on this, a Muslim man who himself had been menaced by the Séléka concluded, 'with the Séléka, we are now without law; we are in the jungle; only those who carry the guns command' (1M,Muslim-Eleveres-guy;Ndele,Mar18). Reiterating that 'there is no justice', the observations that 'they can just do what they want' coming from CdQ who sported many bruises following a beating by the Séléka which he received for complaining about the bad behaviour of their troops (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11) carried a special kind of gravitas.

In the face of such intimidating power inequities, although people were resigned to the fact that 'we must submit to their law' (1M,PastorEpostolique,Ndele,Mar11), they bitterly resented the injustice. Nevertheless, seemingly ignorant of these micro level realities, and reminding us of the degree to which state institutions are simply 'presumed to exist and function as designed on paper' (Call 2008, p.12), the global protection regime continued to focus on their norm diffusion rhetoric, repeatedly calling for the 'restoration' of nation-wide institutions. And, with the micro level messiness being conveniently invisible to the macro perspective, the expectations were high.

In fact, in some six short weeks after the overthrow of President Bozizé, the UNSG was lamenting the fact that the 'Séléka' had as yet been 'unable to restore law and order across the country' (2013a, p.6) - this in a country that at the best of times was caricatured as having government authority that does not reach beyond the boundaries of its capital city (Bierschenk & de Sardan 1997, p.441; Berman & Lombard 2008, p.69). Unsurprisingly, an ICC situational report issued more than a year later equally reported that 'State authority [still] remained largely absent outside Bangui' (2014a, p.21).

Emphasising the understatement by South *et al.* that theoretical notions of protection 'do not always resonate with the realities and experience of local people' (2012, p.2), countless respondents in CAR again struggled to reconcile the promise of human rights with their dire protection circumstances, raising fundamental doubts about the viability of protection by law. A young woman with whom I worked extensively who said she had done 'some reading about rights' added that 'rights exist; everyone knows this; but now, in practice they don't exist at all' (1F,Sandrine,Bangui,July24). Almost poetically illustrating the absurdity, while a group of women recounted the numerous violations perpetrated by the Séléka, a little girl was pirouetting about the compound, seemingly unaware of the gravity of the situation. These women concluded that 'rights exist but the application is a problem' (3F,little-girl-dancing,Kolongo,July 26).

A group of young adults from Bangui who spoke of the extent to which they have had to constrain their lives and livelihoods in efforts to avoid threats observed that 'on the paper human rights are there, but they don't apply here; now they are not applied', adding somewhat wistfully that 'if they existed, this would be a good thing, but they don't' (2F&1M, Castor,Jul30). Our Pastor from Ndele similarly concluded that 'these human rights have no sense for the moment' (1M&1F,Pastor-on-hill,Ndele,Mar15).

Although their experiences varied, many respondents agreed. For example, the group of former civil servants who were forced to flee to the IDP camp located near the peacekeepers base in Ndele stressed that 'now we have no rights; we have no security' (3M,GovFunctionairesIDPs@Fomac;Ndele,Mar14). Pointing to the perpetual harassment perpetrated by the Séléka elements, a group of young women from the same village who were caring for the younger sister of one of them stated very clearly that 'human rights are not at all respected here; you just have to look around to know that' (4F,Christians,young girl;Ndele,Mar18).

While stressing that 'we have no rights; we have no protection', the women with the little girl dancing pointed to the fundamental contradictions asking rhetorically 'if human rights exist, how can these people be killing us' (3F,little-girl-dancing,Kolongo,July26). The

group of young adults from above similarly speculated that ‘with rights, people can’t be just killed like this’ (2F&1M,Castor,July30). Being exasperated with the continuing crisis and her inability to affect change, a female mayor of a heavily affected quartier of Bangui asked rhetorically ‘how can we say we have rights when people are being killed like this’ (1F,Mayor;Begwe-PK12,Aug06). This recalls the musings discussed earlier of the despondent individual caught up in the dire circumstances of the LRA affected area who had despairingly stated that ‘now we don’t know if we have the right to live or not’ (1M,IDP-native,Zemio,Jan10).

Pointing to the institutional gap, people were left wondering ‘who can we talk to about our rights now when we have no authorities’ (1M,CdQ,building-house,Ndele,Mar15). People were all too aware of Brown’s assertion that ‘to be an effective rights-bearer it is necessary to be a citizen of a polity within which rights can be exercised’ (2002, p.127). Explicitly making the connection, a CdQ who was repairing his house after the Séléka had destroyed it, stated that ‘now we have no authorities so we have no rights’ (1M,CdQ, building-house,Ndele,Mar15). In this sense, respondents repeatedly brought the problem back to the collapse of formal institutions.

For example, a Muslim woman who had participated in NGO human rights activities prior to the on-set of the crisis stated that ‘all that was there for rights has been destroyed; now everything is cut; rights don’t exist now’ (1F,Muslim@centreafter kids, Ndele,Mar19). Similarly wondering ‘where can we go to do our rights’ two Muslim women who were fearful to leave their compound observed that ‘we have no law here; the town is without law’ adding that ‘in these circumstances, we can have little hope’ (2F,Muslims @theirCompound,Ndele,Mar16).

This utter failure of functional institutions demonstrates the extent to which the notion of protection as law – which is fundamentally based on such institutions – has created a scenario in which individuals living in states governed by the rule of law become the few who actually have legal rights – as they are the only ones having access to the judicial systems required to realise such rights (Brown 2002, p.118; see also: Hafner-Burton 2013, p.11).

Even more questionable in these zones are claims that the distinctiveness of human rights lies in their ‘empowerment of the individual citizen’ (Moravcsik 2000, p.217; Pupavac 2005a, p.55; Robinson 1998, p.46) and their capacity to ‘protect and enhance individual agency’ (Ignatieff 2001, p.18). While some experts assert that protection is fundamentally about assisting people ‘to claim their rights’ (OHCHR 2005, p.2; The Sphere Project 2011, p.30; Rand *et al.* 2008, p.7), some argue that even in acute contexts this

depends on 'the people's capacity to hold the state accountable' to their obligations to protect (Mahony & Nash 2012, p.9; see also: OHCHR & CESR 2013, p.11). This sits in harsh contrast with reports by respondents that 'if we complain about something, they will simply beat us' (1M,CdQ,Building-house,Ndele,Mar15). Speaking from his personal experience, the CdQ who had been badly beaten by the Séléka underlined that 'you can't open your mouth or they will beat you; you just have to leave them, if not they'll shoot; now people are too afraid' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11).

Having long recognised this, Provost argues that it is 'futile to empower individuals by granting them rights upon which they will be unable to act' (2005, p.344). Indeed, with many people reiterating fears that 'if you complain the Séléka might kill you' it becomes ever more apparent why so many respondents concluded that 'we can just stay like this; we can just wait for peace' (4F,DRC-CPF,Kabo,Feb05). In the absence of the necessary institutions to protect them, people readily recognized that the most viable route to protection relies on the absence of perpetrated threat. In efforts to navigate this fundamental flaw in the vision of protection as law, in armed conflict the global protection regime alternatively turns to international humanitarian law.

3.3 Protection as International Humanitarian Law

As an expert on international humanitarian law (IHL), Sassoli describes it as 'a branch of law that applies in a *fundamentally anarchic*, illegal and often lawless situation such as armed conflicts' (Sassoli 2002, p.401). IHL is thus presented as offering a deeper kind of protective promise than that offered through the legalisation of human rights. The promise is especially founded on the principle of distinction.

Establishing the 'conceptual separation of belligerents from civilians' in warfare (Nabulsi 2001, p.10; see also: Primoratz 2010, p.4; Kasher 2007, p.152), the principle of distinction is lauded as the 'cornerstone' to civilian protection in armed conflict (ICRC 2007a, p.722). As 'one of the oldest rules of the law of war' this principle allegedly 'provides for the protection of the civilian non-combatant population and forbids making civilians the direct object of attack' (Green 2008, p.256). Accordingly, during armed conflict, armed groups are obliged to distinguish between 'combatants, who are appropriate targets of attack and destruction, and noncombatants (civilians), who are inappropriate targets' (Kasher 2007, p.152).

Different than human rights law which governs the relationship between the state and the citizen, IHL governs the conduct of hostilities, defining the restraints that armed actors must exercise in order to contain the 'undesirable effects' of armed conflicts (Green

2008, p.37). Thus as opposed to placing the impetus on the state to protect, IHL obliges armed actors to protect non-combatants by avoiding the causing of harm. Indeed, it recalls the above assertions by respondents that their rights can exist only when they are not abused.

3.3.1 South Sudan

In South Sudan, the lived experience of violence has been characterized by a dramatic and very direct interface between the perpetrators and civilian victims of violence. Quite in contrast to the principle of distinction, countless respondents described experiences of being systematically targeted by armed actors. For example, a small group of people described fleeing their home during the attack on their village at the out-set of the conflict, recalled with evident distress that ‘the soldiers continued to shoot on us; they were shooting on civilians; they killed even small children’ (3F&2M,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

Contrary to the principle of distinction, numerous respondents recounted details of their neighbours, friends and family being killed as they attempted to escape violence that was targeted directly at them. In one village that had changed hands repeatedly, a group of men sitting under a tree recalled that during the most recent armed attack against them, armed actors systematically burned (grass-roofed) houses and fired indiscriminately. They stated that ‘people were forced to run in all directions; they were killing too many people’ (3M,Koch,Dec08). Recalling the same incident, people rebuilding their home that had been destroyed in the attack simply kept their heads down while they stated quietly that ‘people were killed when we were running; there were many but we could not count’ (2M&1F,building-house;Koch,Dec05).

In a nearby village, describing being awoken in the night by yet another attack on their village, a woman described the panic that comes with knowing that they were once again in mortal danger. She reported that when they heard gunfire, they knew they had to flee again stating that ‘we left everything behind; we just had to run; we could only grab our children and run’ (1F,Ganyiel,Nov07). Similarly recounting the intensive civilian targeting that took place in Juba during the initial days of the crisis, one man noted that ‘once we saw that women and children were also being killed; it was then when we realized that this war was killing without reason’ (1M,com rep,Juba-PoC,Oct30).

It is painfully evident that the principle of distinction generated little or no protection for these people. Indeed, these micro level accounts rather position civilians intimately within the unfolding violence. Repeatedly describing what proved to be raw exposure, people recounted the many incidents in which ‘they were shooting on us; bullets were

getting people; those ones were killed' (1M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec07). Moreover, such brutal interface was neither 'coincidental' nor one-off.

Quite the contrary to macro assumptions which dismiss violence as depersonalised and consequential 'collateral damage', respondents described being relentlessly pursued by armed actors, with one man explaining that 'we could not just flee to other villages; the soldiers would find you there' (1M,Koch,Dec07). In utter despair, two sisters described the desperation they felt when they realised that the armed men were tracking their desperate attempts to flee deeper into the bush, explaining that 'they followed us; when we moved to another location, they found us there; we could only kept moving' (2F,Koch,Dec08). From within her personal despair, a woman who had eventually made her way with her small children to the UN protected IDP site added that 'when we fled to another village; these soldiers just followed us again'. Recalling that 'they were shooting and shooting on us' making a spraying motion, she explained that 'they would remain there; each day they would shoot on us; they killed many women by shooting into the bush where we were hiding' (1F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov26).

Another group of women who had similarly eventually fled to the UNMISS site recalled the pure exhaustion of the horror of being pursued by armed men, indicating that 'it could be two days or two weeks; but we had to keep moving' (4F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov27). They recounted the challenges of keeping small children quiet as they hid in the tall grass while they could hear the armed actors moving around near them. Others recounted flight through the swamps at night pulling small children along on tarps and basins – losing those who tumbled into the water in the darkness.

Quite the opposed to macro level assumptions that dismiss such incidents as collateral damage, this pursuit was targeted and sinister, and had brutal personalised consequences with a group of men discussing together at the market in a rural town that had changed hands multiple times explaining that 'they came looking for us when we were hiding in the bush; they were shooting randomly; they shot into the bush; people got caught by these bullets' (1M,eng@market,Koch,Dec04).

Indeed, referencing the specific gender-based risks in this targeted violence, members of a family who had just returned after being forced to flee to the bush during the most recent attack articulated their fears when explaining that 'if they found women in the bush, they would rape them; if she refused they would kill her; if they would find men they would kill them' (1M& 1F,bro&sis,Koch,Dec06). A group of women sitting together in a tea-shop in the market agreed that everyone had to be very afraid because 'these ones raped women and killed men' (3F,harassed@tea-shop,Koch,Dec09). As such, any assumptions

that the principle of distinction garners protection for non-combatants caught up in conflict zones were deeply misleading in this case. In fact, those who counted on this principle often put themselves at even greater risk.

3.3.1.1 Anticipating Distinction – Shattered trust

Due to their long experience with civil war, South Sudanese are fairly knowledgeable about the principle of distinction. Indeed, many respondents referred to the concept. For example, while lamenting the fact that the Nuer as civilians had been repeatedly targeted in the armed violence, the head of the traditional courts in one rural location of Unity State declared that ‘the fighting is supposed to be between the soldiers’ (1M,head-of-CountyCrt,Ganyiel,Nov07). Having been forced to flee as an ethnic minority group when the violence erupted in their own town which is a Dinka stronghold, a group of Nuer women added that ‘it is supposed to be only the soldiers fighting; civilians are not supposed to be included’ (3F,IDPsfromBor,Ganyiel,Nov08).

Because they had expected this principle to be respected, many people appeared to be quite baffled by the dynamics of the crisis. For example, stating that ‘in the beginning we thought it was only fighting between the soldiers’ one young man who worked with me as a translator, but had been working in the capital city of Unity State captured the confusion when people were forced to flee under open fire when explaining that ‘at first we thought the problem was not reaching the civilians’ (1M,trans,Koch,Dec04). Similarly stating that they had ‘at first thought this was an official problem’, a women speaking in English who had also fled this capital city equally explained that ‘we thought this was just a problem of soldier-to-soldier’. After recounting her experiences of being directly targeted, she concluded that ‘now we see that they have a problem with the community; but we are not soldiers; we are innocent people; they should not deal with us like that’ (1F,good-coms English,Leer,Oct25).

As much as they resented this targeting, people were nevertheless quick to realise what was happening. In observing that ‘even women and children are being killed’ a group of women in the Bentiu PoC site who had gathered together in the barren *tuka* of one of them to discuss their experiences with me concluded that ‘now we see it is the problem of the citizens too’ (5F,PoC2orient,Bentiu,Nov22). The young man from above who was my translator agreed that ‘when we saw it included the killing of civilians; then we knew this was a problem for everyone’ (1M,trans,Koch,Dec04).

Concluding that ‘this one has people confused’ he reiterated that ‘they were thinking the fighting should be only between the soldiers; they are not understanding how so many people are being killed’ (1M,trans,Koch,Dec09). As one young man who had

recently finished his university studies in Juba explained, ‘whether you have a gun or if you are a man or a woman or a child; there was no difference; if you appeared, you could be killed’ (1M,Leer,Oct24). Grappling with these contradictions, one young man who as an IDP himself, was volunteering in the Bentiu PoC with an INGO running child friendly spaces stressed that ‘civilians are innocent; they cannot fight with soldiers; they cannot [should not] be killed just like that’ (1M,youth colleague,Bentiu-PoC,Nov25).

More concretely, it was also noted that some individuals had actually integrated this principle into their self-protection strategies, which in effect landed them in far worse circumstances. Explaining that not everyone fled when the armed troops first attacked, my translator noted that ‘some people thought the troops would not kill people; they thought people [as civilians] were safe; they thought it was only the soldiers fighting’ (1M,Koch,Dec09). A well-informed local analyst from the same village added that ‘people did not believe it would reach them; so they waited to see for themselves’ (1M,local-analysis,Koch,Dec10).

Reflecting Nordstrom’s observation that all too often ‘front lines run through average citizens’ homes and livelihoods’ (2004, p.33), all of these people were pulled into the heart of the deadly violence. Agreeing that ‘some people thought they could stay in their home because they are innocent’ our English speaking woman from above recounted the horrific consequences of her neighbours who had done so, reporting that ‘two of these women were raped; one husband was killed’ (1F,Leer,Oct25). Quite in contrast to macro level assumptions of a tidy separation between combatants and non-combatants, micro level insights indicate a deeply entwined and extremely hostile interface. This micro level entanglement was even more visible in CAR.

3.3.2 Central African Republic

Once installed in the capital Bangui, the Séléka continued to perpetrate large-scale ‘military operations’ against civilian populations, while the widely reported weak chain of command allowed for the continuation of on-going opportunistic violence against civilians (African Union 2013b; HRW 2013a). Even the African Union described the Séléka as ‘notorious for its many incidents of rape and cases of violation of human rights and pillage by its elements’ (2013b, p.5). With two community leaders explaining that ‘these armed men move among the population, menacing, stealing food, money and belongings; they are free to do as they want’ (2M,MayorsOffice;Ndele,Mar18), the depth to which the armed actors penetrated into the private spaces and targeted civilians was all too apparent.

While presuppositions about the principle of distinction nevertheless go far in perpetuating the illusion that armed conflict is ‘a dichotomous world populated only by

victims and perpetrators' (Kalyvas 2006, p.21), Nordstrom points to the powerful myth of battlefields as 'self-contained zones of violence' outside of which, normal life continues (2004, p.68). Quite the opposite, the Séléka literally carried out their abuses in the homes of the civilian population. Lamenting exactly this, a CdQ of a Muslim quartier in Ndele, one of the first villages to be occupied by the Séléka, complained that 'we now live among those who carry arms' (1M,CdG,QSultan,Ndele,Mar11).

On their arrival, the Séléka quickly integrated themselves deeply within the communities. Although many initially fled, the dire circumstances in the bush forced them to return to their homes and thus co-exist with the armed actors. The two wives of a man who himself remained displaced for fear of being forcibly recruited by the Séléka, stated that 'now we live among the rebels; we are always in fear' (2F,wives-Muslim,Ndele,Mar 12). A group of women who, despite being visibly poor, had nevertheless been looted by these armed actors, agreed that 'we are always among guns, so we are always afraid' (3F, poor@base,Ndele,Mar09).

Countless respondents in Bangui similarly underlined that 'it is dangerous because these Séléka are around' (1M,Gend,Guito5,Aug02). Immediately after a brutal raid perpetrated by the Séléka in a quartier in Bangui that was considered to support the former regime, a group of people who were visibly agitated by what appeared to be a post-attack adrenalin rush, stressed somewhat redundantly that 'we are very afraid of these Séléka; they are all very well armed'. Recalling the utter collapse of any law and order they concluded that 'we are like birds; it is easy for Séléka to kill all of us like we are birds' (2M& 4F@drinking-place;Post-SélékaPresence; Mandaba,Aug08).

While individual elements of the Séléka visibly infiltrated into the micro spaces of every-day life, respondents continued to recount their perpetual and intimate exposure to the violent whims of these armed men. Our Pastor and his wife from Ndele lamented the fact that 'these armed men circulate and menace us' (1M&1F,Pastor-BaptisteHill,Ndele, Mar15). In Bangui, a former member of FACA underlined his fear of being personally targeted, noting that 'these ones are there in our localities; they circulate; they can arrest you just like that; they can kill you for no reason' (2F&1M,FACAretrater,Ngaragba,Aug 05).

As such, the principle of distinction, lauded as the cornerstone to protection by international humanitarian law, is revealed as yet another myth. Indeed, Provost concludes that international law is 'not merely ill-equipped, but broadly impotent' to protect people affected by conflict (2005, p.1; see also: Hafner-Burton 2013, p.xvi). As such, the viability of protection by law in FPZs is rendered even more deeply questionable.

Recognising these failures at least to some degree, the global protection regime has more recently shifted the emphasis of protection by law towards the fight against impunity. For example, when describing the ‘state of lawlessness, verging on anarchy’ that prevailed after the Séléka took control of Bangui, the UNSG described ‘the pervasive impunity’ as ‘the *main feature* of the human rights situation’ (2013a, p.9, emphasis added). One year later, as the protection crisis continued to unfold across the country, UNSC Resolution 2149 (April 2014) *stressed* ‘the urgent and imperative need to end impunity’ in the CAR (2014a, p.2; see also: Amnesty International 2015, p.10). With FIDH similarly underlining the culture of impunity and lack of accountability that characterised the South Sudan crisis (2014b, p.23), both crises saw this reframing of protection as accountability.

3.4 Protection as Accountability – Tackling impunity

While the issues of compliance and accountability are central to the notion of protection by law (ICRC 2015; see also: Ban Ki-moon 2011; ICRC 2013c, p.17; OHCHR & CESR 2013, p.11), as discussed earlier, notoriously weak enforcement mechanisms allow authorities to decouple their domestic practice from formal commitments made to global norms (Hathaway 2007, p.592; Hafner-Burton *et al.* 2008, p.123; Hafner-Burton 2013, p.9). More specific to the conduct of hostilities in armed conflict, the ICRC repeatedly emphasises the challenge of encouraging all States and all parties to these conflicts ‘to observe the rules and implement their obligations’ as per these universally ratified international humanitarian legal norms (2013b, p.7).⁵⁸

Thus, while both CAR and South Sudan have long-standing cultures of impunity which have been profoundly exacerbated during the current crises. However, as a translation of the global protection vision, tackling impunity is a paper tiger as it comes after the fact – only once the promise of protection has already failed.

3.4.1 Impunity as a Culture

Many analysts have noted a long-established and ‘serious culture of impunity’ in CAR (UNSG 2007, para.41; see also: Alston 2009, p.2; Boukaert 2014; HRW 2007, p.4; Muna 2014, p.16; USG 2011, p.3). Despite having long been identified as ‘one of the most daunting challenges facing the country’ (USG 2011, p.9), the on-set of the current crisis nevertheless prompted repeated calls to the Bozizé regime ‘to investigate reports of human rights violations’ as a means of preventing further violations (UN Security Council

⁵⁸ Described as enjoying ‘universal ratification’ (ICRC 2008b), IHL as a normative framework is said to be adequate for most armed conflict scenarios, however the ICRC has repeatedly reiterated that ‘it is respect for the law that is lacking’ (2013b, p.4; 2002; 2007b; 2013a; 2015).

2013e, p.4), and to ensure that ‘perpetrators of violations and abuses of international law are held fully accountable’ (UN Security Council 2013a, p.2; see also: Boukaert 2014). However, given that such demands had failed during the previous decade, within the midst of the escalating chaos and institutional collapse that characterized the emerging crisis at that point, such discursive efforts read as pure rhetoric, if not out-right disingenuous.

Possibly even more bizarre, in December 2013 when the violence in CAR ratcheted up due to direct civilian participation (OHCHR 2014a), the *primary* recommendation from various norm entrepreneurs was for authorities to ‘prioritise accountability for perpetrators of serious human rights violations and abuses’ in order to send ‘a strong message’ that ‘the international community is committed to holding them accountable’ (OHCHR 2014a; see also: Amnesty International 2013c, p.1). Although it is conceivable that such an approach may have had a protective impact in terms of deterrence if the institutional capacity existed – given the institutional disarray following the Séléka’s seizure of the state, such calls in concrete terms were absolutely implausible.

South Sudan is equally infamous for its ‘longstanding culture of impunity’ (McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.19; see also: HRW 2013e, p.10; HRW 2015a; UNMISS 2014, p.60). Analysts note that ‘the absence of a functioning legal system and the unwillingness of the GoSS to identify and hold instigators...to account’ had long fuelled this before the current crisis (McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.19; see also: Almquist Knopf 2013, p.4; Amnesty International 2013d, p.5; ICG 2011b, p.14; UNSG 2013b, p.18). Indeed, the long history of ‘endemic’ impunity (OHCHR 2013a; see also: ICG 2011b, p.i) is seen as key in driving ‘the serious human rights violations committed since the outbreak of the [current] conflict’ (FIDH 2014b, p.16; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.16; HRW 2014b, p.2; HRW 2014c; OHCHR 2015, p.2).

As such, the UNSC reiterated throughout a series of resolutions that ‘those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable’ (2013g, p.1; 2014b, p.1; 2014c, p.1; 2015, p.1; see also: UNSG 2015, p.16). However, despite multiple reiterations regarding ‘the urgent and imperative need to end impunity’ and to bring the perpetrators to justice (UNSC 2014b, p.2; UNSC 2014c, p.3), some 15 months into the crisis, the UNSG unsurprisingly reported that ‘regrettably, there has been little progress in this area’ (2015, p.16: see also: OHCHR 2015, p.13).

Indeed, trying to make sense of the duplicity in a more philosophical sense, the well-educated young woman above observed with bitterness that ‘the ones with responsibility have all the powers; these ones can ignore the constitution; they don’t have

to explain themselves to anyone' (1F,trans,Leer,Oct25). She reflected the assumptions of many that the men waging the war answer to no one; they are above the law. But this of course refers to the political elite. People reflected on the individuals who occupy the micro space in quite a different manner.

3.4.1.1 A culture of impunity in micro spaces

At the micro level, the impediments to compliance with international norms are particularly seen in terms of individual capacity. In both cases, the level of education of the arms bearers was a critical reference. For example, repeatedly pointing to their lack of education, respondents in CAR systematically concluded that respecting basic human rights was beyond the capacity of individual members of Séléka.⁵⁹

For example, the group of three CdQ with whom we met in Ndele were quick to conclude that 'because these armed men do not understand human rights; they have no respect' (3M,CdQChristians,Ndele,Mar13). Arguing that 'the Séléka have no education; they do not know that people have rights', a university-educated young woman in Bangui thus asked rhetorically 'how can they respect them' (1F,Sandrine,Bangui,July24). Similarly emphasising that 'they have no education; they have no training', a CdQ who because of his role as community leader was forced into daily contact with them lamented that 'they can only do abuses; that is all they know; with no education they have no awareness of human rights' (1M,CdQ,building-house,Ndele,Mar15).

As such, many agreed that because 'the Séléka are not aware of human rights, we can have no rights at this time' (4F,Christians,young girl;Ndele,Mar18). While reflecting on the behaviour of the Séléka troops in her town of Ndele, a Muslim woman captured the sentiments of many when she speculated that 'if these armed men understood human rights, they could not do what they are now doing against the population' (1F,Muslim,fear @DRCoff;Ndele,Mar13). A wisened elderly woman who talked with great sadness about what the continuing violence had done to the country thus concluded that 'now human rights cannot exist here because they are not respected' (1F,wise@balcony,Cité,Aug07).

Even though the same issue sat at the centre of people's efforts to make sense of the on-going civilian targeting in South Sudan, because the armed actors were more closely associated with the civilian themselves,⁶⁰ their lack of respect for human rights was more strongly associated with the lack of rule of law that characterises the country as a whole. Indeed, recalling the earlier discussion on people's reluctance to engage with the

⁵⁹ This was particularly tied to the presumption that the Séléka forces were largely occupying foreigners, made up largely of Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries.

⁶⁰ HRW reported that '[m]any thousands of armed Nuer subsequently joined the Riek-led opposition principally to revenge the massacre and other killings in capital' (2014, p.2).

emergent statutory legal system, a young man working as a school teacher noted, ‘if people don’t know about laws, they won’t respect them; people just don’t know’ (1M,Youth-Teacher,Rumbek,Sept24).

Reflecting Wardle’s observation that ‘one must know what the law is in order to be subject to it’ (2002, p.305), Almquist notes that ‘laws are poorly disseminated throughout South Sudan’ (2013, p.23). However, more fundamentally, many pointed to the lack of education that plagues the whole of the country as *the* causative factor, with yet another young school teacher noting that ‘the rights of individuals are not respected because 70% of the population is uneducated; people don’t know about these rights’ (1M,Youth-Teacher2,Rumbek,Sept24).

This illustrates a particular dimension of Wilson’s observation that when ‘the rule of law remains so imaginary and elusive’ people will resort to self-managed solutions (2007, p.360; see also: Kalyvas 2006, p.61; Keen 1998, p.38). Never having experienced a functional statutory judicial system some respondents explained that ‘if you have a problem with your neighbour, you think that you can just kill them easily because there are no consequences’ (3M,reflections,Rumbek,Nov04). Indeed, reiterating that the legal consequences in South Sudan ‘are not very serious’, a group of legal experts from the national legal think-tank, South Sudan Law Society (SSLS), stated that ‘law as a deterrence does not apply here; people do not think in terms of such consequences’ (3M, SSLS,Juba,Oct04).

Further, drawing in the importance of local normative system, these same legal experts explained that for many people in South Sudan ‘killing is not really seen as a bad thing’ (3M,SSLS,Juba,Oct04). Indeed, in discussions about the criminal notion of homicide with the group of former child soldiers mentioned above who are now working with an INGO, one respondent was adamant that this was something very different than revenge, proclaiming that ‘revenge is not illegal; it is revenge; it must be like that; it must be there’ (2M,INGOnatStaff,Pariang,Aug09). Given that many understood the on-going crisis in relation to revenge, micro level expectations for accountability are framed quite differently, as explored more extensively in chapter seven.

3.5 Protection as External Solutions

From the macro perspective, focusing on political elites, a diversity of approaches to holding individuals accountable for crimes committed in the conflict have been proposed in both South Sudan and CAR. South Sudan has seen proposals for prosecutions in national courts, hybrid courts, truth commissions, international courts, and referrals to the

ICC (FIDH 2014b, p.20; See also: HRW 2015a, p.6). Indeed, with HRW arguing that given that deficits in justice system, 'a purely domestic initiative to try alleged perpetrators is not realistically viable' (2014b, p.14), the ICC is seen as an important means for potentially ensuring justice, even though South Sudan is not a State party to the Rome Statute.

Similarly, in September 2014, the Prosecutor of the ICC announced the opening of an investigation in CAR (ICC 2014b; see also: Boukaert 2014; ICC 2014a, p.15; UN Security Council 2014c, p.2).⁶¹ In mid-2015, Mattioli-Zeltner reported that the interim President had 'promulgated a law creating a Special Criminal Court' asserting that 'if implemented well', this had 'the potential to become a new model of justice for grave international crimes' (2015).

With the ICC being described as posing 'a frontal challenge to impunity' (Ban Ki-moon 2011), such scrutiny is expected to discourage would-be perpetrators.⁶² But with HRW pointing out that the international legal framework is primarily interested in 'individuals who commit serious violations of international humanitarian law with criminal intent' as it is these people who are 'responsible for war crimes' (2013e, p.17), we are reminded of the macro perspective and its emphasis on political elites. In spotlighting the perpetrator of the crime, the individual at risk remains invisible, as do the multitude of additional perpetrators operating at the micro level sketched in chapter one.

Further, as Ogata and Sen explain, the legal promise embodied in the ICC raises hopes that 'the slaughter and massive displacement of civilian populations will no longer occur *with impunity*' (2003, p.21 emphasis added; see also: Ban Ki-moon 2011). However, notably they do not deny that these crimes are likely to continue to occur. With Hafner-Burton pointing out that there simply 'isn't enough coercive capacity to deter every act of defiance' (2013, p.4), protection failures are implicitly accepted as inevitable. Thus, when framed as a fight against impunity, the protection promise is shifted away from that of shielding those at risk from imminent danger, towards achieving accountability for the abuses.

In this the objective of shielding individuals from exposure to deadly threat is at best an assumed corollary. Moreover, being assumed to be achieved through deterrence, it is at best delivered long after the fact. As such, the emphasis on legal accountability actually undermines the more immediate protection objective of shielding people against imminent threat in that it generates yet another reason for spotlighting political elites,

⁶¹ In April 2015 the National Transitional Authorities of CAR decided to establish a Special Criminal Court (SCC) meant to work in coordination with the ICC 'to investigate and prosecute those responsible for committing international crimes in the CAR' (Prosperi 2015; see also: Kersten 2015).

⁶² Ban Ki-moon says one of his greatest satisfactions as SG has been 'to help advance the powers of these courts - and to see how effective a deterrent the ICC, in particular, has become' (2012).

pushing the individual at risk further into the shadows. It further fosters a fundamentally 'post-hoc' perspective on violence, with the aim of punishing perpetrators being prioritised over that of absolute prevention of this deadly violence. In a system that emphasises legal reprisals taking effect only *after* brutal violations have occurred, protection failures are rendered inevitable. When law is called upon to deliver justice and accountability for crimes committed, it has already failed in terms of the primary objective of protection.

Illustrating this, HRW suggests that the establishment of the Special Criminal Court in CAR shows that the authorities 'firmly stand on the side of justice for the victims who lost their lives or suffered atrocities' (2015b).⁶³ They seem to miss the painful irony that the global promise of protection has already ultimately failed those who are now dead. Although Boukaert refers to the ICC, as 'one of the best hopes for victims of the conflict' (2014), in protection terms, such efforts are simply too late. Scrambling to make it work better next time, although not to be dismissed, does not ameliorate the immediate failure. Holding someone to account after the fact is no substitute for delivering concrete protection.

3.6 Conclusions

This chapter has explored protection as law as the most likely trajectory through which globally articulated norms are translated into concrete legal protection in local spaces of FPZs. It has demonstrated that the global-to-local pathway suffers many severs due to the fact that many of the presumptions upon which the global vision of protection by law is constructed prove to be fallacies. At the centre of this, is the myth of the state. However the vision of protection as law adds the further dimension of legal positivism which says that, once codified, rights exist. Thus, not only is the state apparatus presumed to exist, so too is the will and wherewithal to protect legally articulated rights.

Focusing on the interface of the macro and micro perspectives, the meso perspective spotlights people at risk trying to make sense of the often gaping contradictions between the global promise of protection and their lived realities. It is in this process that the extent to which the global assumptions fail to materialise on the ground is exposed.

In failing to problematize the actual institutional processes of protection, the presuppositions upon which the global vision is constructed sit in gross opposition to the realities found in the micro spaces of FPZs. While an escalating crisis systematically sees

⁶³ The UNSC similarly states that such processes enable a society 'to come to terms with past abuses committed against civilians affected by armed conflict' (2006).

the global regime increasing its calls for the state to better comply with its legal obligations to protect, the state capacity to do so is typically collapsing.

Further, the global protection regime is in denial of the Janus-faced characteristic of the state in armed conflict. While the global protection regime doggedly holds it in the role of primary 'protector', it has more readily occupied the role of primary 'threatener'. Not only do these actors lack the will to protect, thus compounding their inherent inadequate institutional capacity to do so, but they often foster a distinct will to perpetrate violence against citizens.

Despite these trends, the main action on the part of the global protection regime comprises the discursive efforts of norm entrepreneurs, who continue to seek to 'socialise' the political elites into 'appropriate behaviour' according to normative standards. While they can go so far as shaming those who fail to comply with these standards, they can actually do little more.

As such, protection as law generates little concrete protective impact in the lives of individuals exposed to the on-going protection threats in FPZs. Being left largely exposed to the on-going violence, people at risk themselves have widely concluded that human rights are unattainable in acute circumstances.

Putting protection as law under question, the 'Responsibility to Protect' expressly draws in the political dimension and seeks to rally political will around the more narrowed notion of protection as physical security which is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 : Protection as Physical Security

'The UN protection mandate is only working within the UN fence' (3M, orientation, Juba-PoC, Oct28).

4.1 Introduction

While advancing norms make a comprehensive promise of protection, the previous chapter has demonstrated the extent to which protection as law, as the most likely trajectory through which these norms are translated into the micro spaces fails to deliver on the promise in FPZs. As such, although the global protection regime is most likely to frame the notion of protection as law, respondents living within the context of acutely violent armed conflict more typically frame it in terms of physical security, as this more precisely indicates what is often their most immediate concern.

For example, a group of women who had gathered together in a tarpaulin tent that was now the home of the family one of them in the UNMISS PoC site in Bentiu, described the horrors of being relentlessly tracked down by armed actors when they were hiding in the bush. Recalling the utterly harrowing tactics of hiding in swamps overnight because they knew the armed troops would not enter there their seemingly simple suggestion that 'protection prevents you from dangers' (5F,PoC2-orient,Bentiu,Nov22) reveals their core needs. With similar seemingly modest expectations, a young man who had fled to an UNMISS site in Juba after realising that the two young men he had been sharing housing with had already been killed equally stated that he would know that protection was there 'when the killing is stopped; when the women and children are not being killed' (1M,in-tent, Juba-PoC,Oct28). The most urgent need is clear.

This narrowing of the notion also has conceptual drivers. For example, building on the previous chapter, commentators note that physical security rights are some of the most codified (Malešević 2010, p.10; Orend 2002, p.26), with 'physical integrity rights' gaining primacy (de Rover 1999; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.1; Sikkink 2011, pp.16–17). In this spirit, Amnesty International stresses that 'the right of all people to be free from violence' is key to protection (2013a, p.3).

As such, this chapter strips the notion of protection to its skeletal form – that of physical security. It traces the trajectory of protection norms from their globally articulated ideational form into the micro spaces via security sector actors. With the state once again located at the heart of this vision, the first section briefly revisits the dilemma of weak or absent national institutions. Returning to the tendency to look for external solutions, the second section then builds on Luck's claim that the 'Responsibility to Protect' draws

physical integrity concerns together into ‘a singular purposeful package’ (2009, p.33), examining international peacekeeping as an expression of R2P. The final section points out that rather focusing on physical security, those who have suffered the consequences of the failures of even this reduced promise of protection rather define protection as peace. They are looking for the removal of the threat as opposed to counting on any promise that they will be shielded from it.

4.2 Reiterating State Incapacity – Weak security institutions

As argued, the global protection regime is locked into assumptions of both the existence of a functional state, as well as high levels of ‘formal capacity and strategic rationality’ on the part of that state (Croft 2010, p.196 cited in Marriage 2013, p.17; see also: Call 2008, p.11; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.17). In the previous chapter, this capacity was presumed to manifest in a complex judicial system. In this case, the assurance of physical protection relies on so-called ‘core’ security actors, which include institutions mandated by the state to use force including the armed forces, police, and gendarmerie (OECD 2007, p.5; see also: Ball 2002, pp.1–2; Bearne *et al.* 2005, p.iii). Being seen as crucial to maintaining security and stability (Ball 2007, p.509; Ball 2001, p.46; DFID 2010, p.1; Francis 2012a, p.3), Call ties them together suggesting that policing and armed forces are located ‘at the intersection of human rights, justice and security’ (2007, p.387). As such, it is through these institutions that the global-to-local translation of the vision of protection as physical security is assumed to occur. However, as depicted in chapter one, this basic institutional capacity is widely absent.⁶⁴

4.2.1 Central African Republic

During the past two decades, the failure of formal protective institutions in CAR has been repeatedly highlighted by international observers. As stated in the previous chapter, the GoCAR has long been characterised as providing ‘virtually no protection for civilians outside of Bangui’ (Alston 2010, p.4). Bangura, as the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, similarly reported just prior to the full eruption of the Séléka crisis that ‘the Government’s inability to provide security and protection was the result of a “very weak” military’, pointing out that being ‘unable to cover the sparsely populated but vast country, its control was basically confined to the capital, Bangui’ (UN Press 2012). Indeed, countering the widely held misperception that authorities ‘exercise full control over their

⁶⁴ As an expert on policing in Africa, Baker identifies the absence of the capacity to provide efficient policing and to ensure human rights compliance as a common feature through the continent (2009b, p.x; see also: Hills 2000, p.6; Mehler 2012, p.49).

agents and their territory' (Call 2008, p.11), many analysts noted that the national security actors had repeatedly 'committed serious and widespread abuses against the civilian population' (HRW 2007, p.6; see also: Alston 2010, p.6; UNSG 2008, para.40; USG 2011, p.3). Thus in addition to profound structural incapacity due to resource constraints (Alston 2010, pp.9–11; Mehler 2009, p.9; Spittaels & Hilgert 2009, p.12), security sector actors were also renowned for their 'deplorable human rights record' and 'bad reputation' (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009, p.13).

Pointing out that the civilian population had long suffered the 'failure of the state to afford them protection and the rule of law', in 2007 HRW emphasized that the population had been left to fend for themselves' (2007b, p.29). In this light, communities commonly organized themselves 'into ad hoc self-defence groups' (Alston 2010, p.8; see also: Berman & Lombard 2008, p.28; USG 2011, p.16), or relied upon larger local armed groups 'to provide protection from banditry' (Alston 2010, p.9; see also: HRW 2007, p.43; UNDP & GoCAR 2011, p.26).⁶⁵ Completing the circle, commentators argue that the emergence of such informal protective institutions 'demonstrates that the state is no longer the primary provider of policing services' (Francis 2012a, p.18; see also: HRW 2007, p.40; OHCHR 2014b, p.7).⁶⁶

People from the micro perspective readily observed that 'our state is very inefficient, very weak; FACA cannot defend this area, they don't have the capacity' (1M, CdQ, Saranion, Ndele, Mar11). This had long been exemplified in the southeast corner of the country, where the LRA had for some three years prior to the Séléka crisis been roaming freely, regularly attacking civilians. Respondents from that area repeatedly emphasized that the national security forces were incredibly inadequate.

Indeed, reflecting Baker's observation that 'the state police are largely absent in rural areas' throughout much of Africa (2008, p.25; see also: Baker 2009, p.91; Francis 2012a, p.14), respondents systematically dismissed the absence of security sector actors in rural areas as completely normal. As such, despite being highly inadequate and profoundly disruptive to people's lives and livelihoods, the main protective strategy adopted saw people from rural areas displacing into the comparatively urban areas because that was where the security actors existed.

⁶⁵ The 2011 joint UNDP and Government of CAR demobilization strategy considered the establishment of community-based auto-defence systems as key to delivering physical protection in rural areas of CAR (UNDP & GoCAR 2011, pp.17–18).

⁶⁶ Grievances over insecurity became a 'justification for armed rebellion' (Mehler 2011, p.134; see also: Alston 2010, p.8), with some such groups eventually coming together to form the basis of the 'Séléka' coalition (African Union 2013b, p.5; Lombard, 2013a).

In this, respondents who had fled from the rural areas to the larger urban areas simply accepted the fact that 'FACA does not exist in these [rural] areas' (6F,IDPs-from Gweinga,SiteB,Jan10). As though this was the most obvious thing, two men charged with organising the IDPs that originated from their rural area explained that 'these villages are small; there is no military base; there is no Gendarmerie; these things do not exist in villages' (2M,IDP-President,Ax-ZemioSite-A,Jan19).). Indeed, people regularly snickered sardonically when asked about the protection or security services that were typically available in their rural villages. Suggesting that such questions are simply ignorant and that I really had no idea if I had to ask such a question, one man who had fled from a rural zone on the opposite side of the town explained that 'these are small villages; *of course* there is no protection there' (1M,IDPman from Site-C,Jan09).

This was readily corroborated by the local FACA representative, the leader of whom was diminutive both in stature and character, looking beaten down in his worn uniform, acknowledged that 'we cannot protect people in peripheral areas and in small villages' explaining that 'we concentrate only on central locations; we can only advise people from the distant areas to relocate to larger towns for protection' (2M,FACA,Zemio, Jan07). However, a group of women who had done just this two years earlier nevertheless concluded that even in their place of refuge 'we know they can't really protect us', albeit quickly justifying their shortfalls, explaining that 'if there was enough of the FACA, they could protect us; but we know they are few' (3F,fromTaban,Site-C,Zemio,Jan10). Even residents from the town agreed that 'we have FACA for protection, but there are not enough of them' (1M,Merchant,Zemio,Dec20).

As such, there was an almost palpable sense of tension that permeated the town. Although the FACA had some vague presence, the broken-down truck on blocks and the apparently malnourished Commander did little to instill confidence among the population. Despite so many having fled their rural homes, they actually found little more reliable security in this place of refuge. After having explained in detail the extremely arduous multi-day displacement trek that eventually brought them to Zemio in search of security, one family agreed in resignation that 'there is no one to protect us here' (2F&2M,IDPs,far-end,Site-C,Zemio,Jan09). Indeed, a well-traveled and well informed resident Pastor from a neighbouring village that had also received many such IDPs agreed that 'we don't see any real protection here' (1M,Pastor,Mboki,Jan19). These dire circumstances were only exacerbated with onset of the Séléka crisis.

While the Séléka imposed itself in Bangui, the UNSG reported a 'dismantling' of the national security apparatus (2013a, p.6). It was widely reported that 'administrative and

political officials have been specifically targeted' by the Séléka (UNSG 2013a, p.8; see also: African Union 2013b, para.15). HRW specifically pointed out that national security actors had 'abandoned their posts due to the prevailing insecurity and out of fear for their lives' (2013a; see also: African Union 2013b, para.15). This was widely corroborated by respondents, with a woman whose son had been 'arrested' by the Séléka for ransom explaining that 'it is the former FACA who are targeted by Séléka; they cannot tolerate to see FACA; they think all of them are the people of Bozizé; so they want to kill them' (2F, kidnapped-boy, Guito5, Aug02).

While some analysts observed that 'any notion of security has vanished' (Aljazeera 2013a), the global norm entrepreneurs nevertheless simply shifted their emphasis away from the former regime, to the Séléka as the new 'authorities', calling upon them to rebuild the national security apparatus. A year into the crisis the UNSG's apparent dismay over the fact that 'state authorities for the most part have not resumed their duties' emphasizing that the 'gendarmerie, police and magistrates are still absent' (2013d, p.11; see also: UNSC 2013f, p.5) seemed rather disingenuous given that these individuals continued to be targeted by Séléka elements. More realistically, Amnesty International reported at that time that 'what remains of the state has utterly failed to offer effective protection' (2013c, p.7). A somewhat similar collapse was observed in South Sudan.

4.2.2 South Sudan

State incapacity to ensure physical security in South Sudan, even prior to the current crisis, was also widely acknowledged. Indeed, with analysts reporting that the GoSS had largely been unable to provide meaningful security since the end of the previous civil war (ICG 2011a, pp.26–27; Kromah 2014; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.12; UNMISS 2014, p.14; UNSG 2013b, p.17), the turning to local armed groups for protection, as seen in CAR is also a well-established practice here (Jok & Hutchinson 1999, p.134; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.14; Reeve 2012, p.41; Walraet 2008, p.66).⁶⁷

Giffen *et al.* emphasised that both the police (SSPS) and the military (SPLA) were considered very weak (especially in rural areas), under resourced, and predatory (2014, pp.15–16; see also Lokuji *et al.* 2009, p.6; Reeve 2012, p.41; Snowden 2012, p.27). Despite what Berger describes as 'concerted efforts of all manner of foreign military trainers and programs aimed at turning a rebel force into a national army' (2014), both

⁶⁷ Many of the contemporary armed militia (re)emerging throughout South Sudan reportedly find their roots in similar 'village defence protection units' and the tactics of arming ethnic groups during the civil war (McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.14; see also: Giffen *et al.* 2014, p.16; Hilhorst & van Leeuwen 2005, pp.537–538; HRW 2013c; ICG 2011b, p.11).

institutions were considered to be 'in transition' (HRW 2013e, p.1), struggling to professionalize (HRW 2013c; see also: Snowden 2012, p.6) prior to the current crisis.

In the popular perception, these institutions were at best considered irrelevant, but were more often seen as a 'threatener'. Indeed, reflecting Keen's observation that protective institutions of weak states often 'pose an even greater threat' because they are likely to be poorly trained, controlled, or motivated (1998, pp.26–27; see also: Francis 2012a, p.6), external analysts reported that the SPLA represented *the* primary source of security threats for the population (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.25; Lokuji *et al.* 2009, p.5). Agreeing, a local chief from a far northwesterly town which hosted a large SPLA base, described the havoc they regularly suffered due to the lack of discipline and a serious problem with alcohol among the troops, stating that 'these ones are not trained, they just have guns; there is nothing good they do; they just do whatever they want to do; they have no respect' (1M,LocalChief,Raja,Sept11).

Grave human rights violations have been widely reported, as were the failures of the authorities to hold the perpetrators to account (Amnesty International 2013d, p.5; HRW 2013e, p.18; ICG 2011b, p.14; UNSG 2013b, p.18). Recalling the previous chapter, Snowden agrees that this is in part due to the fact that the security actors 'have little understanding of the rule of law' (2012, p.34). Adding that 'the police are illiterate, they have received no training; they don't know the law', an NGO national legal advisor added that 'they all come from the SPLA; so they just continue like they did in the [previous] war' (1M,INGONatStaff,Rumbek,Sept26). Agreeing with this, one man who had been an active member of the SPLA during the previous civil war warned warily that 'today a search by a soldier is not peaceful; it lacks all rules; they can come to your house and beat you until you say something; they have no rules that they have to follow' (1M,leg-man,Rumbek, Sept24). Again, these already dire circumstances plunged into even further chaos with the on-set of the current crisis.

With their patterns of violence often having been tied to ethnicity (Almquist Knopf 2013, p.4), the December 2013 eruption of violence saw the national forces divide 'largely along ethnic lines, with many Dinka maintaining allegiance to the government, and many Nuer defecting to join the opposition, referred to as the SPLM/A in Opposition' (Amnesty International 2014b, p.11; see also: HRW 2013d; ICG 2014a, p.i; UNMISS 2014, p.1). With UNMISS specifically noting that both the military and the police were implicated (Ibid, p.19; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.42; UN Security Council 2014a, p.1), the state-mandated security actors, despite being legally bound to protect, had morphed into full-fledged perpetrators of violence, with Amnesty International reporting that 'both

government and opposition forces have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as grave human rights abuses' (2014b, p.8; see also: UN Security Council 2014a, p.2; UNSG 2014b, p.7).

While external analysts repeatedly reported that 'both parties to the conflict have been responsible for ethnically targeted attacks on civilians' (UNSG 2014b, p.7; see also: Giffen *et al.* 2014, p.9; ICG 2014a, p.1; UNMISS 2014, p.18), personal accounts of the lived experiences of FPZs equally located individuals at the heart of the on-going dynamics of violence. For example, reiterating that no one had expected that the violence in the South Sudan crisis would reach them, a young man who had been living in Bentiu prior to the on-set described the utter pandemonium and panic that erupted with the seemingly sudden arrival of armed troops into the town. In an utter absence of physical protection, he underlined that 'the government was shooting heavy artillery at us as we ran away; they were shooting on all the people; we could see the shells hit the ground and burn everything around it; we were running right through that'. He added that 'some bullets were getting people; those ones were killed; they were just left on the way'.

Repeatedly restating that 'everyone was for themselves; no one could help anyone; if you stopped you worried about dying', he recalled a woman giving birth to twins along the way, explaining that 'we saw her lying there; but we just had to step over her; no one could stop; we had just to leave these ones there'. With even more excruciating detail, he described seeing his neighbour and good friend get shot in the leg, stating that 'I saw him fall', but afraid of being killed himself, he reiterated that 'you just had to look for yourself'. After a long pause, he quietly added that 'up to now I still have no information about my neighbour; we have not met since; I don't know now if he is alive or dead; I think maybe he did not make it'. Taking a deep breath and shaking his head, he concluded that 'sometimes I think about these things; especially in the evening when I am alone, these things now come back to my mind' (1M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec08). It is these kinds of horrors that people in FPZs need protection from.

Moreover, even hopes of gaining protection from one or the other parties to the conflict were betrayed, with HRW reporting that 'in many cases fighting forces have retreated at the threat of attack by the other side, leaving civilians behind to bear the brunt' (2014d, p.1; 2015a p.4; see also: OHCHR 2015, p.1). Respondents in Unity State readily agreed that 'the Opposition soldiers fled with the population when the government forces arrived' (1F,Leer,Oct23). This in itself actually exacerbated civilian risk, with a young woman who was moving during the first three months of the crisis with her two small children in the bush as they tried to evade the armed actors pursuing them explaining that

'because the Opposition soldiers were running with us; the government troops were chasing all of us' (1F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

Nevertheless as in CAR, norm entrepreneurs continued to make repeated calls to the authorities to 'reconstitute basic government structures and institutions' and take 'steps to restore security and the rule of law' (Amnesty International 2014a, p.6; see also: HRW 2013a; ICG 2013a), generating yet another extreme example of what Gould describes as 'the contradiction of pledging trust in an entity that is notorious for its unworthiness' (2005, p.65). Indeed, respondents totally doubted the feasibility of state-provided protection, noting that 'with no government, nothing is working for our protection' (12F,by-airstrip, Rumbek,Nov04).

Especially those in areas assumed to be sympathetic to the Opposition were extremely dubious of the state as a source of protection. Instead, many turned to the international community as sketched in chapter two. Even if somewhat intuitively, they were in fact appealing to the R2P doctrine which transfers protection responsibilities to the international community when they are not met domestically (UN General Assembly 2005, para.139).

4.3 External Solutions – Peacekeepers Operationalizing R2P

Many associate civilian protection with direct military action (Mansson 2008, p.580).⁶⁸ Indeed, macro level realist perspectives that continue to hold sway within the global protection regime favour the use of force by a state as a means of protection (Fierke 2007, p.13; Cooper & Pugh 2002, p.11). Thus, as much as protection by law is constructed on the myth that once articulated in law, rights exist, protection as physical security is constructed on the myth that the use of force protects.

In this view, peacekeepers with 'protection of civilian' (PoC) mandates are seen by many as an 'explicit interpretation of R2P' (Nasu 2011, p.365; see also: Breau 2006, p.429; Evans 2008, pp.121-123; Holt & Berkman 2006, p.9; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.1; UNSG 2013f; Weir 2009, p.1; Weiss 2012, p.10). This has given rise to the myth that says civilians are protected once the UN Security Council has issued UN peacekeepers with a PoC mandate. Underpinning this, de Waal adds that observers assume that such forces can 'succeed in the Herculean task' of providing physical protection to civilians, even in the middle of continuing hostilities (2007b, p.1044).

⁶⁸ There are many who argue for the increased need for the use of force as protection (Weiss 2012, p.13; see also: Williams & Stewart 2008, pp.100–101).

To some extent, this myth – or at least desperate hope – is propagated within the micro spaces as well, with individuals in high risk areas in South Sudan who were benefiting from the protective services of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) indicating that ‘we knew of UNMISS as a place where civilians could be protected’ (1M,fromJuba,Koch,Dec04). As a large charactered woman who had clearly emerged as some kind of a matriarch within the Bentiu PoC camp setting said, ‘we thought they could save our lives’ (6F,mamma,PoC3-Bentiu,Nov22). The distinct tone of hopefulness that accompanies such thoughts was captured by one young woman with whom I worked extensively. Having described torturous experiences in the bush fleeing armed violence, she expressed immeasurable relief on reaching the UNMISS PoC-Site in Bentui. When I asked why people have such faith in the UN, suggesting it might be as fallible as the humans that make it up, she responded somewhat laughingly that ‘people think the UN is like a kind of God; we don’t think of it as people’ (1F,trans,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 24). Thus the myth of the UN is held desperately close by those who simply have no other option.

However, the critical protection challenge again lies in the global-to-local translation of the ideational promise. With Holt *et al.* agreeing that the peacekeeping effort reflects the ‘struggle to deliver on the promise of protection of civilians’ (2010, p.iii), others underline the fact that peacekeeping mandates have become ever more complex and are ever more difficult to achieve (Evans 2008, p.121; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.5; Nasu 2011, p.365; Weiss 2012, p.11).

Underpinning observations by South *et al.* that ‘time and again the presence of peacekeepers has been shown to be symbolic’ (2012, p.16), many point to the a critical gap in the translation of UN Resolutions at the level of ‘military doctrine’ and its inability to articulate the means and manner of operationalizing protection of civilian mandates (Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.6; see also: Bosha 2014; Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.5; Weir 2009, p.i). Reflecting this, the concept of PoC itself was reportedly generally unclear prior to the current crisis in South Sudan (South *et al.* 2012, p.16; see also: HRW 2013e, p.41), with a local UNMISS protection expert indicating that both within and outside the UN, ‘people don’t really know what PoC means practically’ (1M,UNMISS,Torit,Aug21).

In this light, Lombard reported a kind of laboratory of peace-building and protection initiatives undertaken in CAR, all with limited success (2013b). Indeed, the profound inadequacies of the various peacekeeping troops deployed at different times to CAR were widely reported. In addition to criticisms by Amnesty International that these troops had failed ‘to swiftly deploy to [rural] areas to protect civilians’ (2014a, p.6), the ICG also

observed that many of the rural detachments of regional peacekeeping units, as sparse as they proved to be, actually had 'no real operational capability' (2013b, p.10).

Respondents themselves provided even more damning reports. Given that violence was being perpetrated throughout much of the country, the coverage by peacekeeping was inevitable inadequate, with some respondents complaining that 'they stay only in the larger areas; they will not go to all locations' (1M, within focus-group, tea place, Kentzou, Sept14). As seen in the LRA areas described earlier, people were forced to flee to urban areas in hopes of finding security. A Muslim woman in the centre of Bangui who was sharing her compound with a number of IDPs lamented the fact that the peacekeepers do not cover the small villages, stating that 'they will not go into the bush; they stay only in the centres; those from small villages are again alone' (1F, Hausa, Mbilli-I, Sept19).

However, people in Bangui more specifically complained about equally sparse peacekeeping coverage within the town itself, as well as doubting their tactics. As has been discussed, the Séléka elements regularly penetrated deeply into the private spaces of people's lives, posing an imminent threat at the multiple checkpoints that they had established throughout the town; while passing on the side of the street; or intruding directly into people's houses.

Agreeing that he regularly saw Séléka elements deep within his residential area in Bangui, a man who had formerly worked as a teacher pointed out that because he had worked for the state, he was now forced largely to remain on his own compound for safety. Noting that these armed men roamed freely, he pointed out that in contrast, the peacekeepers 'circulate only on the grand routes' (1M, teacher&calm-wife; Cité-jean-23-II, Aug07). Indeed, along with many others, the colourful CdQ mentioned earlier who was decked out in a lime green tracksuit, observed together with his grandson that this strategy in effect 'pushes the Séléka deeper into the quartier' (2M, CdQ, tracksuit, Fouh6, Aug02). While passing by in their well-protected armoured tanks, these peacekeeping efforts actually flushed the armed actors into ever-more direct interface with the individuals living within these deep micro spaces. Describing the implications for their lives and livelihoods, two women explained that as a consequence 'we can't go to the river bank' where they normally wash clothes, noting that 'now the Séléka hide there after being chased' (2F&1M, retired-FACA, Kitigba, Aug05). As such the peacekeeping patrols simply pushed the unruly Séléka elements deeper into the personal lives of the people at risk.

Equally fundamental, is the question of timely responses. South *et al.* point out that an external response is usually initiated only 'once violence has already broken out' (2012,

p.16), rather than actually trying to prevent it from occurring to begin with. Within this logic, analysts were equally quick to note that the various incarnations of peacekeeping troops in CAR were also ‘insufficient to end the ongoing violence and help to restore security’ (UNSG 2013a, para.35; see also: ICG 2013b, p.10). Indeed, it was only with the eruption of the second phase of profoundly acute violence in December 2013, one year after the original on-set of the crisis, that the peacekeeping effort was widely acknowledged as ‘not working’ and that ‘a more robust’ intervention was required (ICG 2013b, p.1).⁶⁹ It was essentially two years into the crisis before the UN-led Peacekeeping Mission (MINUSCA) became operational (despite having been authorized by UN Resolution 2149 more than six months earlier).

In South Sudan, the incapacity of UNMISS to meet protection challenges – even prior to the current crisis – was equally widely acknowledged (HRW 2013e, p.43; Amnesty International 2013e). Nevertheless, the eruption of acute violence in December 2013 prompted various norm entrepreneurs to ramp up their calls for UNMISS to better ‘ensure that it fully implements its mandate to protect civilians’ (HRW 2013d; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.54), as though their protective shortfalls to date had simply been a matter of poor motivation on the part of the peacekeeping troops – as opposed to the fundamental infeasibility of their mandate. Nevertheless, in a rapidly deteriorating context, as the need for effective PoC efforts became ever more acute, UNMISS’ action became very ad hoc and spontaneous, as explored in the next section.

4.3.1 Ad Hoc PoC Action

The epitome of ad hoc PoC efforts emerged in the first days of the South Sudan crisis, with thousands of people at risk simply forcing their way inside the UNMISS compounds in their desperate search for protection against civilian-targeted violence. As a clearly spontaneous action driven by the profound fear of people fleeing for their lives, Lilly stresses that the resultant so-called protection of civilian or PoC-sites ‘were not created by design but by default in an extremely challenging situation brought about by a quick-onset crisis’ (2014).

In the early days of the crisis, armed actors reportedly went house to house and killing people based on their ethnicity. This drove frantic masses of individuals, especially those who were near an existing UN base (ie: in Juba and in state capitals), to quickly deduce that the UN may be their best option for sanctuary. For example, recognizing that, as a prominent Nuer Leader in Unity State, he was under particular risk at the on-set of the

⁶⁹ Gilmour argues that ‘the Rights up Front approach ensured the primacy of human rights in the UN’s response in CAR’ (2014, p.243; see also: Deputy UNSG 2013).

violence, one man I found in the Bentiu PoC-site explained that ‘we knew they have to protect civilians’ (1M,Leader,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22).

Indeed, despite the fact that, prior to the crisis UNMISS was not a particularly prominent actor in their lives, people forced their way onto these compounds. However, recalling the high levels of illiteracy throughout the country, awareness of the mandate of the UN in South Sudan prior to the crisis was relatively nebulous, having undergone many reinterpretations as it has gained traction in the population’s understanding. While their desperation generated an extreme demand, people already there urgently informed others about UNMISS. Many respondents from within these sites reported having been guided there by those who had already arrived there. Recalling the frantic chaos, two women who were now quietly engaging in small trade as a means of survival within one of the Juba PoC-sites, explained that ‘we were out there; then people started telling us [by telephone] to run to UNMISS; others had reached UNMISS; we did not even know where it was; those on the telephone told us where to run’ (2F,@market,Juba-PoC,Oct31).

Explaining that the violence took them completely by surprise, two young men in the same camp had who had been residents in Juba as students at the university and were thus without their families similarly explained that ‘we were told to go in the direction of UNMISS; we were told we could be saved there’ with one adding that ‘I didn’t know the place so I just followed those ones who knew it’ (2M,young-men,Juba-PoC,Oct 30), which sounds like a pretty fragile protection strategy when one is being pursued by armed actors. Indeed, given the magnitude of the violence, while thousands of lives were lost, some six days into the crisis saw UNMISS hosting more than 35,000 civilians in its bases (UNMISS 2014, p.17).

These numbers continued to rise as those who had initially fled to the bush and had been pursued by violence, eventually turned to the fragile hope of finding protection with UNMISS. For example, two sisters who had fled with their small children and elderly mother to the Bentiu PoC from deep in the rural areas where they had faced repeated attacks, explained that ‘we had heard of UNMISS before; we knew they were there; we know the rules of the UN; we know they are there to save our lives’ (3F,Mom&Daughters, Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). However, the relief they displayed in finding that their ‘knowing’ was even somewhat accurate reveals just how desperate their protection circumstances were outside of the camp.

The number of displaced people (IDPs) seeking protection in the UNMISS sites across the country peaked at some 202,000 individuals in August 2015 (UNMISS 2015c). However, this represents only a small portion of the more than 2.6 million individuals who

were displaced by the violence. Nevertheless, rather than focusing on what added up to a colossal protection shortfall, a UN official rather described this PoC effort as ‘a great example of the sort of thing we have to do’ claiming that ‘thousands of people alive’ is ‘a clear indicator that UNMISS had made the right decision in opening its gates to civilians’ (UN News Centre 2014b). Indeed, describing this as ‘arguably the single most successful measure ever taken by the United Nations to directly protect the lives and human rights of civilians’ a senior UN Peacekeeping official added that ‘a crucial precedent for UN peacekeeping in other situations’ had been set (Gilmour 2014, p.244). Notably, this ‘innovation’ was quickly credited to the ‘Rights up Front’ initiative, which Gilmore says ‘provided conceptual cover and institutional backing for what was an unprecedented and courageous decision’ by the UNMISS leadership (2014, p.243; see also ICRtoP 2014), tying it all nicely into the macro level top-down logic of the global protection regime – even if it was the force of people facing deadly threat drove the UN to act. While this achievement is not to be dismissed, it again cannot be equated with successful translation of the global promise of protection – which is universal. As such others point to the more fundamental failures of these peace keeping efforts.

4.3.2 A Peace to Keep?

With commentators underlining that peacekeeping success requires the basic element of ‘a peace to keep’ (de Waal 2007a; Evans 2008, p.124) conflicts have raged on in both South Sudan and CAR, thus undermining the feasibility of the peacekeeping efforts. While the legitimacy of such operations is tied to their actual capacity to protect people at the local level (Hunt & Bellamy 2011, p.2), the actual feasibility of success is often minimal. For example, analysts described the circumstances in CAR as ‘nearly impossible’ (Somerville 2014; see also: BBC 2014c). With aggressive behaviour by Séléka elements towards the peacekeepers being commonly visible in Bangui, the ICG noted that after losing a number of confrontations with the Séléka, peacekeepers quickly lost any ‘credible deterrent capability’ (ICG 2013b, p.4).

Being all too visible to all in the environment, these dynamics had a profound impact on people’s confidence. Respondents were quick to conclude that the peacekeepers were ‘afraid of Séléka’, with the woman mentioned earlier whose son was under surveillance due to the fact that her husband had been a member of FACA speculating that ‘the Séléka can just beat them dead with no consequences’. Indeed, she concluded that it was precisely this fear that prevented the peacekeepers from responding to their calls for help, stating that ‘now when we call them, they don’t come to help us’ (1F, single, Bimbo, Aug10).

Respondents recounted many failures of peacekeepers to respond to critical incidents. With significant animation and frustration, the leader of a quartier that faced particularly heavy and repeated Séléka attacks proclaimed in frustration that ‘we know FOMAC⁷⁰ is there to secure the population; but now we wonder what they are doing; they are just standing by with their arms crossed, while Séléka launches rockets into our neighbourhoods and terrorises the people door-to-door; FOMAC is nowhere to be seen’ (1M,CdQ-Mandaba,Aug03).

This man himself faced very direct and intense threats from the Séléka leadership. However, as Weir also points out, ‘peacekeepers have little capacity to address the day-to-day insecurity caused by a lack of law and order’ (2009, pp.11–12; see also: South *et al.* 2012, p.16). Indeed, it becomes clear that peacekeeping troops are indeed largely ill-equipped to address the wide diversity of personalised violence that unfolds in FPZs as briefly sketched in chapter one. While they continued to patrol the main routes in their armoured vehicles, people at risk were forced to deal with the perpetrators of violence on their doorsteps far off these main routes.

4.3.3 Peacekeepers Compounding the Dynamics of Violence

Going beyond the passive incapacity to deliver on their mandate to protect civilians, peacekeepers themselves sometimes contribute to exacerbating the circumstances of people at risk in FPZs. This was extremely apparent to civilians in CAR who were convinced that the Chadian contingent of peacekeepers, the largest of the regional troops, was associated with the Séléka. For example, a man who was under imminent threat by the Seleka in Bangui due to being a gendarme pointed out that he could not trust the Chadians because ‘they are complicit with the Séléka’ (1M,Gend, Guito5,Aug02). A CdQ along with a youth leader from his community agreed that ‘the Chadians are false FOMAC; they are the Séléka’s accomplices’ (2M,CdQ,Gobongo-III, Aug03). While OHCHR reported ‘credible testimonies of collusion between some Chadian FOMAC elements and ex-Séléka forces’ (UN News Centre 2014c; see also: Arieff 2014, p.8), others tied the Chadian peacekeepers more directly to civilian abuses. For example, an International Commission of Inquiry reported evidence of serious cases of civilian killings, forced disappearances and torture (Muna 2014, pp.114–118; see also: HRW 2014a; New York Times 2015). As such, HRW underlined that ‘the reputation and

⁷⁰ The term ‘FOMAC’ referring to an earlier peacekeeping mission entitled Force Multinationale de l’Afrique Centrale, was the widely used vernacular term for all peacekeepers, whether they were regional, African Union or United Nations forces.

legitimacy of the peacekeeping force' was at stake (2014a; see also: New York Times 2015).

Indeed, reflecting Wood's observation that the Chadian peacekeepers are 'the most hated group of peacekeepers' (2014), respondents systematically complained about them. The CdQ of Mandaba quartier in Bangui who was under repeated pressure by the Séléka stated aggressively that 'they cause us more problems' (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug 03). Three young men who joined the above CdQ from Gobongo quartier damningly reported that 'these peacekeepers are here to menace us; they help the Séléka to loot; they join in themselves' (3M,youth,Gobongo-III,Aug03). The CdQ in the lime green tracksuit added that 'these Chadian peacekeepers steal themselves' (2M,CdQ,oldguy-tracksuit,Fouh6,Aug02). Taking this further, the young group who had their house ransacked in search of arms concluded that 'they are double-faced; they want to kill us all' (2F&1M,targeted for guns,Kitigba,Aug05).

During the second phase of the crisis, which saw dramatic civilian-on-civilian violence played out along religious lines, the Muslim portion of the population began questioning the motives of especially the French peacekeepers blaming them for arming the Christian vigilante group that emerged to attack the Muslim population. As such, the neutrality of all peacekeeping troops was under question.

As such, almost two years into the crisis, when the transition from AU to the UN peacekeepers finally took place, the population was feeling very dubious, with a Muslim man who had been forced to flee into Cameroon due to protection failures that allowed for massive and very deadly civilian-on-civilian attacks stating that 'now we wait to see the blue helmets; we wonder if they will provide any security' (1M,trans,mix-fam,Mbili,Sept18). Sounding far more skeptical, a senior businessman who had made his mark in the diamond trade before the crisis, who had also been forced to flee CAR was quick to conclude that 'the blue helmets will be the same' (1M,Kentzou,Sept14).

More recently, the very serious allegations of sexual abuses by international armed forces against children in CAR have emerged. Although such incidents reflect an outrageous exploitation of power and a profound betrayal of the trust placed in these individuals, the institution compounded this in its efforts to keep these allegations 'confidential', with a senior UN employee facing dismissal for 'leaking' a 'confidential' report on these allegations (Child Soldiers International 2015; The Guardian 2015). As such, for multiple reasons, people at risk in CAR were skeptical about peacekeepers. In South Sudan, the UN peacekeepers were pulled into the local dynamics in quite a different manner.

4.3.4 Direct Participation in the Dynamics of Violence - UNMISS

Although UNMISS has not faced the same level of disreputable accusations, they are nevertheless implicated directly with the dynamics of violence, particularly in relation to the so-called PoC-sites. Although the UN PoC sites are fenced off, this was often only with barbed-wire and some built-up dirt piles which actually offered little resistance to those who tried to penetrate – as did the idea that the space within the fence was an inviolable protected space. As such, it was extremely relevant that, being seen as ‘badly outgunned’, the UNMISS troops were considered to be ‘no match for the thousands of heavily armed forces and militias’ who repeatedly attacked civilians both inside and outside these camps (ICG 2014, p.i).

With the activities of the armed actors near the PoC-sites being reported by analysts as creating ‘an extremely intimidating atmosphere for civilians and posing serious restrictions on the freedom of movement of IDPs’ (OHCHR 2015, p.6; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.13; ICG 2015, p.18; OHCHR 2015, p.6), respondents offered many details of this. For example, people within the Bentiu PoC-site described the fear they had when trying to leave the compound, with one man who had an American accent as a result of having spent a number of years there as a refugee in the previous war noting that ‘the soldiers are standing near the gate of UNMISS; they have a bad heart; sometimes they will let us pass; other times they can just beat us’ (4F,American-man,Bentiu-PoC,Nov25). A group of Nuer women who looked to be utterly exhausted on their arrival to Unity State after taking a harrowing trip up the Nile following their clandestine flight from the Juba PoC-site emphasized that ‘even though UNMISS is there inside the PoC; people are killed when they go out’ (5F,Juba-TyerIDPs,Ganyiel,Nov12).

Indeed, external analysts continued to report that ‘civilians have been injured, abducted, and killed within or in the immediate vicinities of UN bases’ (Amnesty International 2014b, p.38; see also: ICG 2014a, p.i; Lilly 2014). As such, many of the PoC residents in these camps were simply too afraid to venture beyond the gates. A group of three men located within one of the largest camps in Juba complained that for the most part they were unable to leave the camp, reporting that ‘when we go outside the PoC we are being targeted’ (3M,orient,Juba-PoC,Oct28). A young Nuer man who was originally from Unity State, but had been in Juba for his studies at the on-set of the crisis was desperate to continue with his studies. While noting that if they were unable to study, they Nuer would be even more subordinate to the Dinka in the future, he nevertheless worried that ‘if you go outside, you don’t know if you will be okay; you don’t know if you will return’ (1M,youth-student,Juba-PoC,Oct31).

UNMISS's lack of response to threats posed outside its gates of these PoC-sites again led residents to speculate about collaboration. For example, the women in the Bentiu PoC-site earlier mentioned as emerging as a matriarch, explained that 'the Mongolians [being the most visible UNMISS policing contingent within that PoC-site] have an agreement with the SPLA; they see what soldiers are doing just outside the gate; they are killing people just there, but the Mongolians do not go out; they do not stop them; they say their protection is only within the gates; it is not outside' (6F,Mamma-Leader,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22).

However, UNMISS's failure to protect was even more overtly exposed when some of these PoC-sites have come under direct attack by 'angry mobs', of both civilians and militia (UNMISS 2015a, p.1; see also: Amnesty International 2014b, p.13; UNSG 2014a, p.5). For example, in April 2014, such a group overpowered UNMISS military personnel and breached the perimeter of the PoC-site in Bor with the alleged intent 'to target and kill Nuer IDPs' seeking refuge within the site (2015a, p.20; see also: Bosha 2014, p.20; ICG 2015, p.20).⁷¹

While UNMISS themselves have emphasized that such attacks are 'endangering the Mission's ability to effect its protection of civilians mandate' (UNMISS 2014, p.16; see also: Security Council 2014b, p.7), these dramatic protection failures have left individuals who were seeking protection within the sites feeling extremely ambivalent about UNMISS's protection capacity. Recalling that 'many people were killed inside the PoC', a group of men who had gathered at a teashop to discuss these issues with me asked accusingly 'did UNMISS not have their mandate then' (6M,round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14). Reflecting on the contradictions, one of the participants of this group who now headed the judiciary in the camp, stated that 'the UN is protecting us but we are being killed anyway; the UN protection is not good; if it was good, we could not be killed just like this' (1M,justice,Bor-PoC,Dec13). The man who was working as my translator, also a resident of the camp, agreed that 'if the UN protection was good, what happened in April would not have been there' (1M,trans,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

Such uncertainty and unreliability further undermined people's confidence. Reiterating that 'the UN let us be killed last time', a senior Nuer community leader from Unity State who had been caught at the on-set of the crisis in the Dinka dominated town of Bor and thus forced to flee to the UNMISS PoC site for protection explained that 'the UN protection has not improved; we know the security here is not good' (1M,court-from-Leer,Bor-PoC,Dec13). Indeed, almost a year after the attacks on the Bor PoC-site, the

⁷¹ Of those killed, 47 were IDPs who had sought protection within the UN compound (UNMISS 2015a, p.22).

ICG agreed that ‘the security of the base and the civilians inside is a constant concern’ (2015, p.19).

As such, many respondents were convinced that they remained extremely vulnerable. Indeed, being very angry about this, one Nuer man who was also from Unity State and desperately wanted to leave the Bor PoC-site and return to his home because he was suffering from some form of a progressive disease aggressively claimed that ‘although the UN says they have improved the protection’ it only functioned ‘because the Dinka have not returned in the same way’. Stating that ‘if the Dinka come again, it will be the same’, he was extremely resentful of the fact that he remained as vulnerable as he was (1M,sick,Bor-PoC,Dec14). With the camp hosting a lot of women-headed households, many reiterated that ‘now everyone is fearing; people are fearing that it can happen again like in April’ (1F,young-one,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

These persistently precarious circumstances pushed people to look for alternative protection options – typically at significant peril. For example, explaining that ‘people staying in UNMISS sites have lost hope; they are frustrated; only UNMISS protects them; but they know that even UNMISS is not safe’ the group of women described above who had made the perilous voyage to Unity State from Juba had taken their lives and those of their small children in their hands (5F,Juba-Tyer,IDPs,Ganyiel,Nov12). As Nuer, they travelled by a boat captained by a Dinka trader from Juba to Unity State. This in itself was already an extremely bold move. But they emphasised that at any one of the many check-points they had to pass through, either they or the captain could have been killed if the armed men realised that they were Nuer fleeing Juba, and that the captain was aiding them to do so.

Such decisions are the result of a careful weighing of the comparative risks. Being fully aware of those entailed in the perilous trip, they were nevertheless driven to leave the ‘protection’ provided by UNMISS. However, from the perspective of those within the Bor PoC-site, such an escape was infeasible as the residents feared that to leave the UNMISS compound would entail confronting imminent armed threats which were presumed to surround the PoC-site. Based on assumptions that angry armed men surrounded the PoC, three teachers participating in the group mentioned above reiterated that ‘if we step out of the PoC; if we go 100 meters we will be killed’ (3M,Teach-eng@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec 14). Demonstrating the degree to which imagination added to the escalating fear, the very well-informed young man who worked with me as a translator asserted that ‘it is like a person meeting a wild lion; if the armed men meet you out there, they will just kill you’ (1M, trans,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

As such, although UNMISS protection had tragically proven to be a highly fallible means of translating the global promise of protection, many were nevertheless forced to rely upon it. Being fully aware that all other protective mechanisms had collapsed, the two youth students located within the Juba PoC-site stated that 'only UNMISS is protecting us now; no one else is doing this' (2M,youth-students,Juba-PoC,Oct301). Further, when I asked PoC residents what other protection options they had, they reacted as though I was quite ignorant, asserting that 'there is no other place to get protection except inside this PoC' (1M,trans,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

This illustrates the terrible paradox that many commentators note between the 'high expectations that international forces will protect them' and the '[in]adequate capabilities [of these forces] to react to dynamic threats' (Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.6; see also: Giffen *et al.* 2014, p.5; South *et al.* 2012, p.16). The very real dearth of viable protection alternatives combines with a sense of imminent exposure to intense threat prompts communities to simply redouble their expectations - or at least hopes - that these peacekeepers can protect them.

These hopes were especially dramatic for the significant number of residents in the Bentiu PoC-site who arrived to the PoC-site after having originally fled to rural areas. As two women explained, although they were originally from Bentiu, at the on-set of the crisis 'we fled deep to the interior' because they were prevented from reaching the UNMISS compound by armed actors. However, given that 'we were still being chased by men with guns in the bush; we realised that there was no good solution, so we decided to try to come back to UNMISS' (2F,snakebite,Bentiu-PoC,Nov24). While quite stoically describing the unrelenting protection threats encountered in the rural areas, another group of women preparing to go outside the camp to collect firewood, explained that 'we kept hearing of UNMISS so we decided to try to get there' (4F,holding-back,Bentiu-PoC,Nov27). After describing a harrowing event of trying to collect food for her children and being caught by the gunfire of a group of armed men, a woman showing me her scars explained that 'we were so tired; we wanted just to get to UNMISS' (2F,inside-with-visitor,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 25). From within the experiences of such dire circumstances, few could believe in their rights to the globally articulated universal promise of protection. From this perspective, the notion of protection is radically reduced. The challenge at hand is that of bare survival. In this sense UNMISS was pragmatically seen as a tool to help in reducing their direct exposure to deadly violence. Thus for many, the expectations are extremely minimalist, and anything that exceeds that is a bonus.

4.3.5 The Only Provider of Protection

Being intimately aware of the extreme protection risks that result due to direct exposure to armed actors, even the partial protection capacity of UNMISS represented a dramatic improvement for people at risk. UNMISS's fallible promise of protection is thus seen by at least some as better than nothing. And the experience of 'nothing' is shocking. Many of the women respondents in the Bentiu PoC site reiterated gut-wrenching experiences of hiding in the bush, trying to keep themselves and their children alive in the face of the armed actors who seemed to be hunting them down. Recalling that 'we soon saw that there was no good place; no place was safe with those ones following us' a group of women who had gathered together in the windowless '*tuka'* the wife of one of the local leaders, sitting together on a woven mat on the floor stated with a kind of stoicism that 'we decided "just let us go back to UNMISS"'. Beyond the fact that they did not really know what UNMISS had to offer in terms of protection, they equally were all too aware that the effort to actually get back to UNMISS was extremely high risk, noting that 'this was not safe; there were many risks; but we thought "if we die, we will just die"; we decided that we must try because we will certainly die if we don't try' (5F,orient,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). It is against this kind of raw exposure to risk that people judged the added value of the UNMISS PoC sites.

One woman I encountered at the water point within the same camp, let's call her Sara, agreed to recount how she had reached the UNMISS camp in Bentiu. She invited me back to her extremely modest '*tuka'* which was a small square wooden frame covered by tarp, holding one bed and three woven mats on the floor. A few pieces of children's clothing hung neatly on a line of string stretched across one side if the wall. We sat on the edge of the bed while she explained quietly that she had not heard from her husband or elder son who had to run separately from her and the younger children so as not to put them at even greater risk because especially males were targeted for execution; and the random shooting on people was even worse when men were presumed to be part of the group. Armed men seemed to simply randomly shoot in the direction of the people. Thus she had fled alone with two smaller children, and while recounting the fact that the armed actors 'kept shooting on us in the bush', she described gradually coming to the realisation that 'the situation was no better anywhere we fled'. Recalling the point at which that 'everything was exhausted' she said that some of the women eventually decided to try to reach UNMISS. Indeed, having been on the run for months on end, for many (especially women and children) it was the state of sheer depletion and exhaustion that pushed them to consider this despite the profound risks the trek entailed. As Sara said, 'we thought of going back to UNMISS; we had nothing else' (1F,inside-tuka',Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

Importantly, they had really only heard vague rumours about UNMISS. As she said, 'we were just guessing that we could be safe in UNMISS, but we decided to try to come here'. As such, banking on a vague shadow of hope of a desperately needed 'safe haven' that provided at least some degree of a buffer between them and the perpetrators of the on-going violence, she explained that 'we thought maybe we could survive to reach UNMISS' (1F,inside-tukalBentiu-PoC,Nov23).

The motivation compelling especially women to confront these risks was the desire/obligation to keep their children safe. One young woman, let's call her Rebeca, who had also lost track of her own husband and an elder brother had eventually decided to try to made the treacherous move from the interior back towards UNMISS on her own with her two young children. She captured the sentiments described by many when explaining that 'my children were suffering; they were going to die if we remained there; people advised me not to return to UNMISS because it was too dangerous; but I had to try; I said "even if they are going to kill me I am going to try"' (1F,trans2,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

Women recalling similar experiences systematically pointed to the perils of this undertaking, especially emphasising fears of rape. Rebeca, reflected on her own anxieties explaining that 'we feared to find the soldiers along the road; they can just kill you; if you are a woman, they must force you to sleep with them, and not just one, sometimes many men' (1F,trans2,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Indeed, she recounted the case of a girl whom she guessed was about twelve, who had fallen behind the group she was running with and had been seized by a group of armed men and repeatedly brutalized. Rebeca described the state of this young girl when they found her in all too graphic detail, adding that 'now I don't know if she is even alive'. Nevertheless, with UNMISS being seen as the potential for some relief from these relentless risks, many were quite amazingly able to push through their fears.

Having been the direct targets of deadly violence for months on end in the rural areas, many respondents described their reaching the UNMISS site with a profound sense of relief. Two women who had done the arduous trek together stated that 'after three months of running in the bush, now that we are here in UNMISS; the situation is somehow ok; now we were feeling free' (2F,snakebite,Bentiu-PoC,Nov24). Ironically, one of these women had been bitten by a snake a few days earlier as she had been forced to search for food in the nearby swamp. Despite the continuation of deadly threats, in relative terms, UNMISS was a dramatic relief. While acknowledging the continuing hardships, people systematically underlined the relief, with two sisters who had run with their elderly mother and four small children indicating that 'once we arrived to UNMISS we thought now our

problems are finished'. After recalling some of the horrors they had experienced along the way, they concluded that 'now we are just thinking of our children; our problems here are somehow ok'. With the small children sitting nearby in a notably subdued manner, the grandmother concluded bluntly that 'if we were still outside, all these small children would now be finished' (3F,Mom&daughters,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

As such, the notion of protection becomes one of relativity. Despite profound shortfalls vis-à-vis the global promise, those who had experienced far worse circumstances were profoundly relieved to receive whatever bit of protection UNMISS could provide. Indeed, it was with a similar level of relief that three women who had only just reached the camp, and were now sharing the *tukal* of the sister of one. Even though the overcrowding and lack of essentials was all too apparent, their conclusion that 'the UN is now the one that takes care of the civilians; we are now under their control [ie: care]' (3F,new-arrivals,Bentiu-PoC,Nov26) spoke volumes.

However, although physical security is obviously at the centre of the protection challenge, as discussed in chapter two human protection is never *simply* about physical security. Thus, as these women settled into their relatively improved security situation, the broader shortfalls of the UNMISS PoC-site became more prevalent.

4.3.6 Partial Protection – Physical security versus 'human security'

As discussed in the introductory chapters, human protection is generally far more encompassing than simply physical security. When framed as *Human Security*, it is a multi-dimensional endeavour that also concerns food, health, and economic security among other considerations (UNDP 1994, p.21). Thus, while the grandmother from above readily acknowledged that 'it is much better in the PoC than it was 'outside'', they quickly confronted food shortages, flooding, inadequate shelter and illnesses, all of which were rampant within the PoC-sites. While noting that 'outside we had no food, no anything', they appreciated that fact that 'here we get some food', but underlined the fact that 'we lack firewood to cook' (3F,mom&daughters,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Explaining that 'we cannot survive here without firewood or some small money', Rebeca pointed to the potentially deadly implications of this, noting that 'if you have no food, you must go outside; but if you go out, those soldiers will beat you' (1F,trans 2,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23) – recalling the above described threats of violence surrounding the camps

Given the broader shortfalls of essential services within the camp, the fact that children continued to suffer again forced women into impossible choices; choices that regularly exposed them once again to potentially deadly threats. As one women said 'I am fearing the soldiers with guns outside; but if I do not want to go out, the children will

continue to suffer' (4F,marked-mamma,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Resigning herself to the fact that 'now we must go out every day to get firewood to sell so we can give milk to the babies', the woman above who had been bitten by a snake described the process of constantly weighing these impossible 'choices', explaining that 'going out you can face unknown problems; but you must go each day again for the children' (2F,snakebite,Bentiu-PoC,Nov24).

Thus, beyond the harrowing experiences they had endured on their own in the bush, these women were once again forced to summon the courage to step beyond the miniscule field of protection provided within UNMISS's barbed-wire fences, and re-expose themselves to the multiple threats existing in the surrounding area. As a group of women called together by the above mentioned matriarch indicated, 'shortages force us to go outside; but in one direction you meet wild animals who will kill you; in the other direction the men with guns will rape you; but when you see the little food for your children, you just force yourself to go out to get some firewood to sell; if you see your child dying; you just say let me die first' (6F,Mamma-Leader,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22).

Men within these PoC-sites also confronted this imminent survival dilemma. If they remained within the confines of the camp, their lives were reduced to that tiny existence. This was especially concerning in Juba, where normal life somehow continued outside the camps. Indeed, reflecting on the profound courage it took for ethnic minority Nuer men to venture outside, three respondents in a Juba-PoC explained that 'we all are at the same level of risk; some go out; these ones are willing to do that risk; the rest of us stay here inside the camp; we do not go out; those ones who go out, they take the risk' (3M,in-tent,PoC-Juba,Oct28). Everyone was all too aware that stepping outside the camp gates entailed deadly risks.

Adding a bizarre further dimension to this, some respondents were ironically quite judgemental of those who, after weighing their options, deemed it necessary to take the risk to go 'outside'. For example, accusing them of 'running up and down' [ie: being impatient], our matriarch from above stressed that 'those who are patient will survive; those ones who are not patient, they will not survive'. Keeping in mind that she was a matriarch, thus carried significant influence, she criticized those who prioritised hunger over life, stating that 'we know they are suffering with hunger, but life is bigger; life is more important than food' (6F, Mamma-Leader, Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). While this somewhat bizarre rationale exposes the dearth of options available, developing the capacity to tolerate starvation was actually a fairly widely acknowledged auto-protection strategy, with the above mentioned group of women who had gathered with the leader's wife explaining

that when they were hiding in the bush ‘some died of hunger; it was only those who can go without eating who could survive; you have to teach your children to go without food; sometimes they must sleep without eating; sometimes my children went five days without eating; it is only the ones who learned not to eat that came back; these are the ones who survived’ (5F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). Thus, even when under the ‘protection’ of UNMISS, people at risk are forced to make their ‘choices’ between hunger, rape, beating and death.⁷²

In such circumstances, the universal promise of protection is exposed as a myth. Again the meso lens spotlights how people make sense of the contradictions. It reveals the importance of the differing point of reference between the macro and micro perspectives. Rather than putting stock in the macro level aspirational ideal, individuals at risk continually adapted their notion of protection in relation to the worst case scenario – anything better than that represented some form of protection. While this creates extremely low expectations, it also absolves those formally responsible to protect from their failures.

4.3.7 Re-interpreting the PoC Mandate – Managing expectations

Most respondents within the PoC sites readily absolved UNMISS (and their state) of responsibility for protection failures outside of the UNMISS gates. Indeed, they widely accepted claims that the UN bore no protective responsibilities outside of these barbed-wire fence. In this line, the two sisters and their elder mother from above speculated that ‘if something gets you outside of the gates, this is not the concern of UNMISS; they are not in control of that’. While implicitly accepting, based on their own experiences, that there are indeed simply no limits in warfare, they noted that ‘the soldiers can just take you away at the gate and kill you’, adding that ‘UNMISS cannot help with that; they tell us they control only what happens inside the gates’ (3F,Mom&daughters,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

Indeed, it was widely indicated that UNMISS had fostered this view. For example, a group of men, who as community leaders gathered each day at a central meeting point that consisted of a three sided shelter with a long table and a number of plastic chairs to meet with people from within the camp and discuss the business of the day. They reported that ‘UNMISS told us they have no mandate outside; they say the UN protection mandate is only working within the UN fence’ (3M,orient-Juba-PoC,Oct28). Our matriarch from above agreed that ‘they say their protection is only within the gates; it is not outside’ (6F, Mamma-Leader,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22).

⁷² These are the type of ‘skills’ that auto-protection options draw upon in such circumstances, as discussed in chapter six.

Reflecting a similar conclusion, two young men from within a Juba PoC-site equally stated that ‘if you go outside, it is your own responsibility; if you get a problem out there, you will be accounted on that yourself; outside it is not UNMISS, it is on the person going out’ (2M,youth-reps,Juba-PoC,Oct30). A man who was in the Bentiu PoC recovering from injuries he had sustained as an opposition soldier in the early days of the conflict added that ‘this is why we are here; inside the camp the security is good; they cannot allow us to go outside; if you go outside, who will you will blame; if something affects you outside, it is only you [ie: your fault]’ (1M,former-sold,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Exposure to untold risks just outside the gates of these sites was thus completely normalised.

As such, whether by design or by accident, dramatic limitations are imposed on the universal promise of protection. People at risk in FPZs dismiss aspirations and rather conceive of protection vis-à-vis their realities. Naturally, having had little or no experience of a functional state (or substituting institution), they put themselves at the centre of the protection equation, presuming that they themselves bear the primary responsibility, thus creating a fundamentally different vision of how protection is meant to work. At the point at which survival decisions need to be made, aspirations are nowhere to be seen. Assuming all responsibilities, what are fundamental institutional protection failures are often reframed as stemming from the so-called risky ‘choices’, which entail for example, the choice to go out and search for food for one’s malnourished children as opposed to opting to teach them how to cope with starvation.

However, this so far has been a discussion of protection within the UNMISS fences. This concerned only a very small portion of the conflict affected population in South Sudan. The claim that the mandate to protect does not extend beyond the UNMISS fence reflected a far broader protection dilemma.

4.3.8 Choosing Which Civilians to Protect?

By the end of 2014, the total war-affected population in South Sudan was estimated at some 4.1 million individuals, with about half of these people having been forcibly displaced from their homes – but UNMISS was hosting in these PoC-sites only some 10% of the displaced population (OCHA 2015, p.1; see also: FIDH 2014b, p.15; UNMISS 2015c; UNSG 2015, p.8). With analysts underlining the fact that the at-risk population outside these sites ‘creates a huge conundrum for UNMISS’ it was clear that

with the utter collapse of the state, UNMISS faced the impossible choices of deciding which portions of the affected population to protect, and which to leave on their own.⁷³

Emphasising the regularity of capacity and resource shortfalls, Holt and Berkman underline that UN peacekeeping missions in general are often forced to decide ‘which civilians to protect and which to leave vulnerable’ (2006, p.8; see also: Weir 2009, p.1). This was dramatically amplified as the crisis in South Sudan rapidly escalated, with Amnesty International observing that UNMISS has now ‘found itself in an unprecedented situation and in a role for which it was not prepared’ (2014b, p.37). Further, with the UNSG speculating that ‘this will not be a short-term crisis’ (2014a, p.17), many questions on how UNMISS can operationalise their PoC mandate remain unanswered. Unsurprisingly, the PoC-sites were prioritized, however, this left a massive portion of the conflict affected population totally unprotected (ICG 2014, p.15; Protection Cluster 2014, p.16).

In the face of this, UNMISS had reportedly developed policy guidelines which indicate that ‘the mission should only offer protection if it had the military capability to provide physical security’ (Lilly 2014). In this sense, the UNSG has repeatedly underlined that ‘sustaining the presence’ of the IDPs in the PoC-sites in itself has ‘continued to place a huge strain on Mission resources’ (2014a, p.8). However, this simply ignores the fact that the population within the PoC-sites actually represents only a small portion of those whom the UN is mandated to protect.

Indeed, illustrating a rapid normalization of these broader protection shortfalls, various analysts actually encouraged UNMISS to recognise their limitations and work within them. For example, noting that ‘the number of people outside the bases creates a huge conundrum for UNMISS’ (2014, p.27), Giffen *et al.* suggested that ‘UNMISS will need to make hard choices when prioritizing which people and which areas to protect’ due to resource constraints (Ibid, p.30). Even more damning is Bosha’s suggestion which, beyond accepting that UNMISS provides protection for only those within their bases, actually calls for ‘clear policies laying out what can realistically be expected from UN peacekeepers in PoC sites’ (2014). In effect, this policy guidance calls on UNMISS to articulate the extent to which they plan to fail to protect. Not only does this institutionalize protection failures, it ultimately condones resource driven protection responses which fall devastatingly short of the global promise. This sheds even more damning light on Freedman’s observation that ‘although the UN may protect some human rights in some situations, there are vastly more failures than successes’ (2014, p.xvi).

⁷³ The issue of UNMISS’s under-resourcing was already apparent in South Sudan with HRW reporting an inadequate capacity to provide ‘blanket physical protection’ for all populations at risk even before the on-set of the current crisis (2013d, p.43).

4.4 Protection as Peace

Although peacekeepers are now seen by many as the 'go-to' protective mechanism tasked 'to deliver on the promise of protection of civilians' (Holt *et al.* 2010, p.iii), the incapacity of both UNMISS in South Sudan and various peacekeeping missions in CAR to substitute for failures of the state protection apparatus is all too apparent. Indeed Rod-Larsen claims that the generally mixed results of peacekeeping have fostered conclusions that there is simply 'no substitute for capable and legitimate states' (2008, p.vii). This brings us full circle, back to the fact that the provision of physical security in FPZs is fundamentally challenged by the failure of the institutional expression of the state. Despite the fact that physical security is one of the most fundamental of the basic human rights, this right is often not protected (Orend 2002, p.26). This again raises questions about the notion of protection. With this and the previous chapter demonstrating the extent to which the transmission of the globally articulated protection vision fails to penetrate into the local spaces of FPZs, the notion undergoes yet another re-conception.

While the global protection vision conceives of protection largely as an action of shielding and guarding, based on their repeated experiences of direct exposure to the perpetrators of violence, people at risk gave little merit to the feasibility of this. They rather focused on a concept of protection action that was more fundamentally concerned with removing the source of the threat. In this sense, for many, protection was conceived of in relation to 'peace'.

4.4.1 South Sudan

Arguing that 'protection cannot be there until we have peace', an adult couple who were sharing the compound of their relatives after having been forced to flee attacks in the capital where they had been living, explained that 'if we keep fighting like this, people will finish themselves' (1M&2F, speaking-en, Ganyiel, Nov12). They suggested that there can be no protection in an actively violent context. Indeed, for many respondents in South Sudan, peace was seen as the foundation for protection. Observing that 'peace is when people are not agitated; they are without conflict; it is when the killing is stopped', a community representative from within the one of the UNMISS PoC-sites in Juba stressed that 'peace is a must; we must have peace' (1M, com-rep, PoC-Juba, Oct30).

In this view, many stressed their hopes for peace. Seeing peace as 'the absence of war', two youth representatives from the same camp agreed that 'in peace people should not do harm to others', thus with a kind of desperate hope they stated that 'we are just praying that peace will return soon' (2M, youth-reps, PoC-Juba, Oct30). From another PoC-site in the interior of the country, another youth leader who was working closely with NGOs

explained that ‘the only thing that can happen is peace; it is the only thing that can be good for everybody’ (1M,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

This call for peace was even stronger from those in the interior who were utterly exposed to the on-going violence, with countless respondents repeatedly stating that ‘people can only concentrate on peace’ (1M,internal,Koch,Dec03); ‘what we want is peace’ (1M,Eng@market,Koch,Dec04). Having recently been attacked by government forces, residents were only beginning to return to the village of Koch when I visited. Sitting under a large tree, a small group of men who were identified as the local court recounted the recent attacks describing the shooting of people, the systematic burning of houses and the kidnapping of young girls as ‘wives’ for the soldiers, concluding that ‘we now can only put peace as the priority’ (4M,courts,Koch,Dec09). Agreeing with this, a national staff of an INGO in the same town stressed that at this point ‘the only way is if there might be peace’ (1M,nat-staff,Koch,Dec07). In the face of repeated brutal failures, people put little merit in the idea of being shielded from the on-going violence.

Stating that ‘with peace, all these problems will be cleared’, a group of young teachers in a neighbouring village which had also been repeatedly attacked by armed groups stressed that ‘everyone wants peace; we need peace; now people are very tired; people are just praying for peace’ (3M,teachers,Ganyiel,Nov13). People in these rural areas had not even had the little bit of protection that the PoC-sites offered to those who were able to reach them. As such, they were repeatedly directly exposed to the on-going violence. For them, the only real protective solution was the removal of the threat. This was also a widely held conclusion in CAR.

4.4.2 Central African Republic

Protection was equally intimately tied to peace and security in CAR. For example, people facing threat due to the presence of the LRA in the southeast of the country were very clear about the need for peace, with a single woman who was suffering debilitating back pain due to the heavy subsistence agricultural activities she was forced to revert to in order to keep her family alive explaining adamantly that ‘there must be security before we can have protection; security should be re-enforced so that the villages remain calm without incidents’ (1F,with-back,Zemio,Dec17). Many respondents again defined peace as ‘the absence of incidents’, with a group of displaced woman who had fled to the same urban area in efforts to escape the LRA adding that ‘we’ll know we have peace after one year without incidents, then we’ll believe it’ (6F,IDPs-Gweinga,Jan10).

Observations were very similar in relation to the Séléka crisis, with a group of women from a northern town occupied by the Séléka stating that ‘now we can only wait for

security and peace' (4F,DRC-CPF,Kabo,Feb05). The mechanic man introduced in earlier chapters who was under surveillance by the Séléka because he refused to work with them explained that 'it is always peace that is interesting for us; without this, people suffer; the morale is low; there is too much tension', thus concluding desperately that 'we want things to change; we just want peace to return' (1M,Safari-man,Ndele,Mar13).

As seen in South Sudan, countless respondents focused on their desire for peace, with many stating that 'people just want peace to return' (1M,Muslim-eleveres,Ndele,Mar 18); 'we hope for peace' (1F,CdQ,Fatima-I,July29); 'we just wish for peace' (1F,wise-old-lady-on-balcony,CitéII,Aug07). Reiterating that 'we just want peace; with no peace we cannot be calm', knowing all too well that there indeed was not buffer between them as a civilian population and the perpetrators of violence, the CdQ who had been beaten by the Séléka stressed that 'without peace, we have no life' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele, Mar11).

Based on their experiences of countless protection failures, the absence of protection in the sense of being shielded against threat was almost reflexively accepted. Implicitly doubting the feasibility of any such protection during the on-going crisis, a pastor in the same town further stressed that 'without peace we cannot survive' (1M,Pastor-Epistologique,Ndele,Mar11). Agreeing that they were extremely vulnerable, the French-trained legal advisor of the former regime – introduced earlier and who was now hiding deep within a local quartier in Bangui – explained that 'we are afraid because we have no security' concluding very starkly that 'clearly we have no guarantees' (1M,LegalAdvisor,Gbafio,Aug01). Indeed, living through often brutal experiences of violence, people are left to grapple with the contradictions between the prevalent protection rhetoric and their dire circumstances. In this line, this same legal advisor stressed adamantly that 'human rights don't exist with the Séléka; we are under their threats but there is no reaction from the level of human rights; we hear about them, but there is nothing really coming from them; there is no follow-up' (1M,Legal-advisor,Gbafio,Aug01).

Similarly struggling to make sense of equally cruel inconsistencies in South Sudan, the earlier introduced woman who was washing clothing in a cramped area within the Bor-PoC posed a direct challenge to any assumptions of the universality of protection, suggesting that 'it seems that the international community does not take all human beings as human beings' (1F, red-washing,Bor-PoC,Dec13). People at risk, as the end users of what proves to be an aspirational promise of protection, are not at all convinced. Human rights or an international protection effort of any form is simply not making the difference they need.

4.5 Conclusions

Despite claims in the UDHR that '[e]veryone has the right to life, liberty and security of person' (UN General Assembly 1948), expectations of an absolute right to physical security are unfounded in FPZs. State-centric protection whether as law, or the reduced notion of protection as physical security relies on the existence of basic institutions, capacity, and will to protect – much of which are absent in these zones.

The consequent protection failures have not gone completely un-noticed, with the R2P doctrine emerging as a global effort to give greater political leverage to the state-centric global protection vision. Building on the myth that the use of force equates with protection, peacekeeping has emerged as the concrete translation of the promise of protection, as an alternative to the failed domestic state, that is articulated via the R2P doctrine.

However, the above has shown how dramatically short these efforts fall in FPZs. With yet another form of the global protection promise being broken, individuals at risk are ever-more brutally exposed to deadly threats that characterise their contexts.

Thus moving away from this militarized conception of protection, the next chapter looks at the protective capacity of INGOs, who as obviously non-coercive actors, typically adopt the broader notion of protection as 'human security'. INGOs are widely presumed to be able to function as an alternative to dysfunctional state institutions, especially within the deeply micro spaces that these armed protection actors are unable or unwilling to access. As such, the following chapter asks if INGOs can function as an alternative trajectory through which global protection norms can be translated into concrete impact in the micro spaces of FPZs.

CHAPTER 5 : Protection as Humanitarian Action

'NGOs are human rights here'
(1F, Muslim, called to DRC, Ndele, Mar 13).

5.1 Introduction

While people located within the micro spaces of FPZs are those who most desperately need global protection norms to deliver on their promise, the circumstances of these zones pose some of the greatest challenges for the global protection regime. The previous chapters have demonstrated that in profound contrast to the state-centric global vision of how protection works, these zones are characterised by a very real absence of formal protective institutions. Thus, both the capacity *and* the will to protect are in short supply. Thus, while the primary trajectories through which globally articulated norms are expected to be translated into concrete impact include that of law and that of physical security, these channels actually offer little for people at grave risk. The consequent failures leave very real individuals fully exposed to the deadly threats that pervade their environment.

With formal institutions failing to protect, few respondents actually consider their protection options in relation to the state. As a local matriarch in CAR said, 'people don't really think of the state; we just have to find our own solutions here' (1F, MamaYagouda, Boguila, Dec07). Before the current crisis, respondents in South Sudan equally indicated that 'the government doesn't really think about these things [ie: protection] very much' (2M, Old-chief, Wau, Sept06). This was even further compounded in those cases where security sector actors emerged as perpetrators of violence.

However the dysfunction of formal protective institutions does not equate with the end of the global protection promise. With Freeman emphasising that people appeal to human rights at the point that legal institutions fail (2002, p.10), the suggestion is that there is in fact a deeper dimension through which the promise is delivered.⁷⁴ This recalls the distinction between human rights as a legal project (which relies on formal institutions) and that of a social project which rather emphasizes the moral sense of rights (Freeman 2002, p.6; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.9; Orend 2002, p.34). Beyond the formal institutional framing, Orend argues that moral rights generate a 'well-grounded and concrete claim on the actions of other people' (2002, p.17). In establishing a 'moral obligation' (Ibid, p.54), they are claimable by everyone and can be held against everyone (Ibid, p.2). As such, Pogge adds that everyone has a 'moral duty to respect human rights', with those being able to do

⁷⁴ See also Rancière regarding Arendt's argument on 'the right to have rights' (2004).

more being obliged to do so (2000, p.46). This framing of human rights directs the spotlight towards the so-called civil society and specifically INGOs as the most likely deliverers of rights when formal institutions fail.

This concept is alive and well in the micro spaces of FPZs. In the absence of formal protective institutions, people at risk readily transfer their hopes of protection to various informal actors including INGOs, with a local leader in CAR stating that ‘now we see the NGOs as our government; we know they are there for our protection’ (1M,CdG, QSultan,Ndele,Mar11).

Indeed, due to the absence of the state in South Sudan, NGOs have long played a critical substitution role. As the leader of a local NGO explained, ‘people report problems to NGOs because they know us; we have a strong relationship; they don’t go to the government because they are not here’ (1M,CBOLeader,Kapoeta,Aug24). Further INGOs are seen to embody a far deeper importance, being symbolic of the somewhat mystical ‘International Community’ which is generically seen as ‘the bringers of peace’ due to their role in bringing about the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and the achievement of independence in 2011.

Moreover, given that the rights discourse emerged in South Sudan at that time, these processes are also intimately associated with what people refer to as ‘receiving rights’. For example, a local analyst who had received some human rights training from an INGO explained that ‘during the war, people might have heard something small about human rights, but rights were not practiced at that time; it was the CPA that made them trickle down’ (1M,PactNatStaff, Juba,Oct02). In this vein, a group of women in a locality that had been a focus of violence in the previous war agreed that ‘human rights arrived with the CPA; we learned about rights when peace came to South Sudan’ (5F, women,Bor,Oct6). As a wizened old man as the Head of the local traditional courts stated, ‘with the CPA we got our rights’ (1M,Head of TraditionalCourt,Pariang,Aug11).

As such, in contrast to any notion of rights being inalienable or universal, these respondents point to the signing of the CPA as a clear starting point of awareness of human rights in their environment.⁷⁵ Further, within such discussions, claims that ‘our rights have been found’ (5F, ladies,Rumbek,Sept24); or ‘our rights have arrived’ (5M,old-men,Pariang,Aug10) reflect an assumption that human rights are granted or withheld, by some superior power – and this power is often assumed to be the so-called ‘International

⁷⁵ This was consolidated with national independence gained in 2011, with respondents explaining that ‘now that we have been given our nation; we now have human rights’ (5M,old-men,Pariang, Aug10); ‘when we got independence, we were told that now everyone can get their rights’ (3M,elderlyNearAfex, Rumbek,Sept26). A group of women added that ‘it has been announced on the radio that there are now human rights’ (3F,young-women with mother,Rumbek,Sept20).

Community'. Reflecting this, the group of women above explained that 'during the civil war we had no rights; we didn't deserve rights during that time; but we have now been given our rights by the international community' (5F,Rumbek,Sept24).⁷⁶

With INGOs being emblematic of the international community in rural areas, they are widely presumed to also be 'the bringers of rights'. For example, prior to the on-set of the current crisis, a Police Commissioner in a deeply rural location explained that 'you the international community [pointing to the INGO present in his community], it is you who have given us our rights' (1M,PariangPoliceCommissioner,Aug10). It is from within this frame that in the current crisis, people quickly turned to INGOs as their primary protectors. Many respondents claimed that 'it is now only NGOs that can do protection for us; there is no other means of protection except for these organizations; they give us rights' (5M, leaders,Koch,Dec04); 'they are the people of human rights' (2M,older-with-sun-glasses; Ganyliel,Nov12).

A very similar 'saviour' sentiment is also extended to INGOs in CAR. For example, various local leaders indicated that 'even if NGOs are not our state, when our state is not there; when the state does not help us; we count on NGOs' (1M,CdV+5M,Batangafu,Feb 27); 'with no authorities to work with, we work with NGOs' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar 11). Indeed, as the current security crisis escalated and state institutions visibly collapsed, respondents stated that 'there is no one else who can arrange these security problems; so we put our eyes to the NGOs' (1F,Muslim,fear@DRC;Ndele,Mar13); 'it is NGOs who are now responsible to address these problems' (16F,with-kids@tree,Batangafu,Feb21); 'we have our eyes fixed on NGOs; they must help us now' (1F,Mayor;BegwePK12,Aug 06).

Reflecting Freeman's assertion that people appeal to human rights after formal institutions fail them, a Muslim woman who had participated in various NGO activities prior to the onset of the current crisis asserted that 'NGOs are human rights here; they cannot leave us alone, human rights must continue' (1F,Muslim,fear@DRC;Ndele,Mar13). Even a former Mayor said that 'NGOs are here to protect the population; we count on them now' (1M,SGMayor,Ndele,Mar11). But what protection role do NGOs actually play in these acutely violent contexts? Are they a reliable trajectory through which global protection norms can be translated into a concrete impact in the lives of people at risk in FPZs?

⁷⁶ Especially women regularly used the phrase 'now that rights are here...' referring to the specific CPA stipulation of 25% for women's representation in all levels of government (IGAD 2005; Edwards 2004). Quite tellingly people referred to this 'arrival' of human rights as '*gaining civilization*'. More specifically, the articulation of *women's* rights is widely referred to as the '*upgrading*' of women (3M,Pactw/s;Juba,July24).

5.1.1 The Role of NGOs in Protection: Direct or indirect?

The introductory chapter sketches an important role for INGOs in international affairs (Cox 1981, pp.126–127; Chandler 2005, p.4; Katzenstein 1996, p.2; Hafner-Burton & Ron 2009, p.361). As part of the ‘transnational network, they provide an alternative to ‘conventional (diplomatic) methods’ (Hilhorst & van Leeuwen’s 2005, p.538), playing an important catalytic role in prompting states to adopt ‘appropriate behaviour’ (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Keck & Sikkink 1998). Emerging as ‘the conscience of the regime’ (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; Kaldor 2005, p.iii; Kaldor 2003, p.129) these actors have the legitimacy to function as so-called ‘moral entrepreneurs’ (Finnemore 1996, p.71; Nadelmann 1990, p.482) in the transnational space, and as monitors of state action in the domestic and sub-domestic spaces as well (Ban Ki-moon 2012; see also: Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; Kaldor 2003, p.129).

Nevertheless, as non-coercive agents, INGOs rely upon the mechanisms of discourse and persuasion in their norm diffusion efforts. Such efforts in the transnational space, as discussed earlier are largely state-centric. However some INGOs apply these discursive efforts equally intensively in the local environment, engaging directly with armed actors controlling the violence at the micro level.

Others take on more concrete substitutive role, with many commentators pointing out that INGOs are regularly sought to fill gaps left by state failure to provide essential public goods (Baker & Chandler 2005, p.2; Bierschenk *et al.* 2002, p.9; Duffield 2001, p.50; Freeman 2002, p.7; Ignatieff 2001, p.8; Smillie 1995, p.32). In this vein, a 2011 Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored review of global humanitarian response suggested that ‘much of what is today called ‘humanitarian’...is simply substitution service delivery’ (Ashdown *et al.* 2011, p.17). Others emphasise the importance of this substitutory role in protection, with the humanitarian department of the European Commission (ECHO) claiming that ‘a core objective of humanitarian action’ is that of ‘ensuring *protection* of populations’ (2009, p.4). Thus, despite the fact that armed peacekeeping troops have failed to do so, INGOs are sometimes expected to take on the role of directly translating globally articulated protection norms into concrete action in the local spaces of FPZs.

5.1.1.1 Lost in Translation

The first level of challenge is that of simply translating ideational norms into concrete action – a process which Wilson describes as often being ‘partial, unpredictable,

and haphazard' (2007, p.357; see also: Mosse 2006, p.940).⁷⁷ Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford emphasise that such translation is typically 'highly problematic', with flaws, inevitable disjunctures, contradictions and irrationalities being 'normal' (2005, pp.198–199; see also Mosse 2005, p.23). Indeed, agreeing with their observations that sometimes 'things just don't fit' (Ibid, p.209), Mosse and Lewis add that the practical application of an idea seldom reflects 'an instrumental or scripted translation of ideas into reality', rather describing it as a 'messy free-for-all in which processes are often uncontrollable and results are uncertain' (2006, pp.9–10). As such, simply on a conceptual level, efforts designed to translate globally articulated protection norms into a concrete impact can be expected to be problematic.

This is unsurprisingly exponentially compounded in FPZs, with Coelho noting that such translation efforts inevitably accentuate tensions between 'the normative vision' and the conditions of the context into which these norms are being translated (2005, p.192; see also: Merry 2005, p.3). While acutely violent FPZs are some of the most difficult protection contexts, thus posing some of the greatest challenges to the realisation of global protection promise, INGOs are nevertheless expected to deliver in such contexts.

Undertaken in extremely restrictive operating circumstances, humanitarian action is animated by the so-called 'humanitarian imperative' and its call to act in the face of human suffering (GPCWG 2010, p.15; ICRC 1995, pp.1–2; The Sphere Project, p.20). As opposed to being a translation of the comprehensive global promise of protection, the humanitarian objective is dramatically reduced to that of protecting 'the fundamental well-being of individuals caught up in certain conflicts or "man-made" emergencies' (Forsythe 2001, p.675). As Provost says, the central goal of humanitarian action is 'to protect the integrity of the human person' (2005, p.2; see also: ICRC 2008a, p.752; ICRC 2009a, p.4; The Sphere Project 2011b, p.29). Protection as humanitarian action is thus reduced to the objective of 'preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity' (ECHO n.d., p.6; see also: Borton 2009, p.5; ICRC 2009a, p.8).⁷⁸

Moreover, given that this practice unfolds in profoundly complex and dangerous contexts, Slim points out that the imperative affirms humanitarian action 'as a supreme duty as much as a right' (2002, p.162). In this sense, the importance of action takes primacy over end results. As such, the 'humanitarian imperative' is seen as prompting

⁷⁷ This is contrasted with the notion of translation as 'vernacularization' of norms (Merry 2005, p.216; Speed 2007, pp.165–184; Goldstein 2007, pp.51–74; Goodale 2007b, p.144), which captures the process in which normative ideas are reinterpreted within the context in which they are taken up.

⁷⁸ As Hopgood says, '[t]he best they may occasionally do, and it is often a lot even if wholly inadequate to the task, is provide relief in situations of great distress' (2013, p.1).

urgent action, with The Sphere Project asserting that ‘nothing should override this principle’ (2011b, p.20). The emphasis is explicitly on the intent to act as opposed to impact generated.

Noting that such practices often prove to be unpredictable (2007a, p.4), Goodale underlines that ‘it is the idea - and not the many contradictions - of human rights that compels social actors’ (2006, p.26). As Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford observe, rather than fostering ‘an instrumentalist view’ designed to achieve specific results, these actors are far more generally prompted by a ‘moral obligation’ to act; to simply do something (2005, p.205; see also: British Red Cross n.d., p.2; Cohen 2000, p.17; Van Rooyen 2012; Mahony & Nash 2012, p.13).

It is in this sense that the NGO effort is often described as being driven by sentiments of ‘solidarity’ and ‘social-community’ (Cohen & Arato 1992 cited in Hamilton 2003, p.69), seeking to repair ‘the torn fabric of global civil society’ (Keane 2003, pp.13–14; see also: Hopgood 2013 p.9). From this perspective, simply standing in solidarity with people at risk is seen as success – despite the fact that this falls profoundly short of the global promise of protection.

Thus, in asking how the humanitarian protection effort might be able to do what state institutions and indeed armed peacekeepers fail to do, this chapter is organized in three sections. The first returns to the ‘catalytic’ role of INGOs as norm entrepreneurs, looking at how this model, typically applied in the transnational space, is adapted and applied in the domestic and sub-domestic spaces in efforts to socialise those who control the violence. The second looks at the effort by humanitarian actors to assume a role as primary protector. The final section examines micro level perceptions of the NGO effort and the human rights project more generally.

5.2 Protection as a Discursive Effort

From a macro level IR perspective, the role of NGOs as norm entrepreneurs in the transnational space is seen as central to the norm diffusion model. However, these efforts look very different from the micro perspective. When juxtaposed with the immediate urgency of acute violence, socialization efforts aimed at prompting progressive change in the behaviour of the state have significantly less relevance as a means of protection. As such, although many actors continue with this transnational effort, others have adapted the discursive norm diffusion model, applying it directly within the micro spaces of FPZs. The first of the following sub-sections explores the continued transnational efforts, while the second looks at how this is adapted and applied in the local spaces.

5.2.1 Discursive Efforts in Transnational Spaces

The previous chapters have referenced numerous examples of efforts by INGO such as HRW, Amnesty International, ICG, and Oxfam among others, to socialize the states and ‘authorities’ more generally of both CAR and South Sudan into ‘appropriate behaviour’.⁷⁹ On the rationale that the roles and responsibilities of INGOs are ‘secondary to the legal responsibility of the state or other relevant authorities’, the Humanitarian Sphere Project, as a highly regarded sectoral guide on minimum standards in humanitarian action, emphasises this catalytic role stating that INGOs must focus on ‘reminding these authorities of their [primary] responsibilities’ (2011b, p.6; see also: Rand *et al.* 2008, p.31). As such, building on their presumed moral authority as the so-called ‘conscience’ of the protection regime (noted above), these actors engage directly with the various political elite, reminding them of their legal obligations to protect.

In this they rely upon a unique capacity to generate what Baker and Chandler refer to as ‘pressure from below’ (2005, p.2). Crucial to this is the role they play ‘in monitoring state behaviour’ in the domestic environment (Dunne & Wheeler 1999, p.2; OHCHR 2005, pp.15–17; UN Security Council 2014a, p.5).⁸⁰ Recalling the fact that states all too often ‘decouple’ their conduct in their domestic environment from commitments made in the global realm (Hafner-Burton *et al.* 2008, p.121), done in the domestic and sub-domestic spaces, such monitoring informs the socialization efforts that unfold within the transnational space.⁸¹

Concretely, such monitoring consists largely of extracting details of misconduct and pushing that information up-stream into the transnational spaces. Documented details of abuses occurring in the micro spaces are thus used to leverage the ‘socialisation’ efforts in the macro spaces. For example, pointing to this potential, some respondents in CAR suggested that ‘the Séléka leaders will be afraid of being held to account for these exactions by the international community if they know NGOs are watching them’ (1M&1F, teacher&calm wife; Cité-II, Aug07). Similarly, in South Sudan, people suggested that ‘NGOs must communicate to stop these ones from killing us’ (2F, frustrated Leer, Oct25).

⁷⁹ ‘Authorities’ is a general term used to refer to all authorities and bearers of arms – State entities, armed forces, international peace-keepers, armed groups, clans and other non-State actors – who are able to launch hostile action against persons or a population and who are responsible for protecting those who fall under their control’ (ICRC 2008a, p.752).

⁸⁰ Reflecting this, Ban Ki-moon asserts that ‘the key to preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and other crimes against humanity’ is a ‘robust’ civil society (2012).

⁸¹ In armed conflict, these efforts particularly focus ‘on monitoring violations’ (Ogata & Sen 2003, p.28; see also: Dubois 2009, p.5) vis-a-vis the normative standards defined by IHL or the so-called rules of warfare. As such, the conduct of all parties to the conflict is monitored.

A far greater number of respondents indicated a more general desire to have their plight known externally. For example, a group of local leaders in CAR stressed that ‘NGOs must pass the message that we are having no rights here; we count on them to make our suffering known’ (3CdQ,Christ,Ndele,Mar13). In South Sudan, people agreed that ‘even if NGOs can’t stop this [crisis], then they must at least tell people of our problems’ (5F, women,Bor,Oct06). This reflects what Mahony and Nash refer to as ‘traditional conceptions of field monitoring’ in which ‘the production of reports for Geneva or New York [is seen] as a sufficient result’ (2012, p.7; see also Rieff 1999). However, it has long been apparent that such knowledge does not necessarily equate with a protective response.

Nevertheless, many external actors continue with what Hopgood describes as this ‘rather arid notion of “witnessing”’ (2013, p.10). For example, in early 2014 the SRSR for Sexual Violence in Conflict argued that in CAR ‘the importance of deploying various fact-finding missions by the High Commissioner for Human Rights cannot be overestimated’ (Bangura 2014a, p.4). As part of a macro process, the results of such efforts are used to inform high level dialogue focused on the political elite. Although OHCHR claims that the objective in this is to ensure that rights are ‘acknowledged, respected and fulfilled by those under a duty to do so’ (2005, p.12), the pushing of such information up-stream seldom achieves the concrete protective results urgently requires in the local spaces of FPZs.

While fostering what Hopgood refers to as the ‘self-perpetuating global structures’ (2013, p.1), the disjuncture between the macro and the micro discussed in previous chapters becomes all too apparent.⁸² Reflecting Fierke’s observation that the end objective of protection of individuals at risk is often simply presumed in macro processes (2007, p.13), Mahony and Nash underline that strategic links back to the people at risk are often not made once such reports are presented (2012, p.7). Recalling that the individual is largely invisible through a macro perspective, they are made visible in this case only to the extent that their suffering provides substance for high level discussion that finally circulate within the macro realm and around the political elite. As such the INGO within the transnational space as per the norm diffusion model serves as a tool for leveraging what are essentially state-centric diplomatic processes.

However, in the micro spaces where such monitoring takes place, INGOs are in close proximity with people at risk. Being the face on these data collection processes, these NGOs are eventually blamed by people at risk for continuing protection failures. This was very evident in South Sudan with civilian respondents who had faced repeated armed

⁸² Hopgood notes that Amnesty International researchers ‘see research as action’ (2006, p.26), going on to note that ‘there is something powerfully attractive in being an organization of record’ (Ibid, p.223).

attacks stressing that 'we are reporting to NGOs about the war, but the war keeps on; we wonder what are they doing about this' (1M,administrator,Koch,Dec09). Reflecting the frustration of many over the lack of results, a woman in the Bor PoC-site stated that 'we get so many questions; but there is no follow-up; how can we believe you that you put our ideas into the form of implementation' (1F,Bor-PoC,Dec13). Clearly, these respondents fully expect INGOs to be a conduit through which the global promise of protection will be realised. They are thus even more frustrated with what are seen as NGO failures than with the blatant failures of the state or UNMISS.

Respondents located within the UNMISS PoC-sites looked primarily to INGOs for improved circumstances, with one very angry man in the Bor PoC-site (which had previously been attacked by armed assailants) proclaiming that 'you human rights people have investigated; you know who killed our people; we want to know what you are doing about our problems; as we can see, there is nothing' (1M,sick,Bor-PoC,Dec13). A group of women in the same setting added that 'we blame the NGOs because they are the ones who know how human rights are working, but now they are doing nothing' (2F, washing,Bor-PoC,Dec14).

The fact that their protection crisis may be under discussion in the global realm means little to people facing imminent deadly threats on a daily basis. In desperate need of concrete results, the angry man from above wondered 'why is the international community keeping silent; why do they do nothing' (1M,sick,Bor-PoC,Dec13). One year into the crisis, seeing no indication of improving circumstances, respondents were left wondering 'why does the world keep silent; we are wondering if we are bad people or what; we are now complaining against the world' (1M, School-Teach;Leer,Oct24). Indeed, recalling that INGOs are seen by many at the micro level to equate with the 'international community', they became the target of significant anger with the man above stating accusingly that 'although they have all witnessed the killing of our children, they are still just asking questions; now these NGOs are only watching; they are doing nothing for us now' (1M,sick,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

This sheds a particular light on assertions by Mahony and Nash that 'the stereotype of human rights field officers simply collecting data and writing reports is outdated and incomplete' (2012, p.134). Rather than monitoring and reporting on incidents in order to pursue formal processes such as holding political elites to account after the fact, this information must equally be used 'to influence human rights dynamics on the ground' (Ibid, p.5). As such, instead of prioritising the formal processes taking place in the transnational space, some humanitarian actors turn their discursive efforts towards

informal processes within the micro spaces that are aimed at ‘socializing’ the armed actors *in situ* in efforts to directly influence the point of interface between the ‘threatened’ and the ‘threatener’.

5.2.2 Discursive Efforts in Local Spaces – Engaging armed actors *in situ*

Previous chapters have demonstrated the close proximity between the people at risk in FPZs and those who control the violence in these environments. Being profoundly aware of the extreme power differentials, respondents repeatedly underlined their impotence in the face of violent threat, stating that ‘it is not possible for us to have dialogue with the armed actors; they are unreliable; they are unpredictable’ (1M,Big-Bro of IDPs, Batangafo,Feb21); ‘we don’t have the power to do this ourselves’ (5M,OldRefugees, Zemio,Jan02). As such, many looked to NGOs to intervene with the armed actors on their behalf with the local armed actors.

In South Sudan, respondents encouraged INGOs to engage directly with the armed actors, suggesting that ‘NGOs can mediate between the two sides; they can normalize the problems we have; they can tell those big ones not to kill their people’ (1M,translator,Koch, Dec04). Emphasising the power differentials, a group of Elders stressed that ‘only organizations can discuss with them to stop the fighting; it is only NGOs who can talk to them; if NGOs don’t do this, they will continue fighting’ (5M,elders@market,Koch,Dec04). Another large group of men added that ‘the UN & NGOs must advocate on behalf of the innocent people; if there is no peace those ones will come again and destroy all of what NGOs have given us’ (8M,gathering-with-cows,Koch,Dec09).

Respondents in CAR equally stressed that ‘NGOs must speak with the armed groups; we cannot do so on our own’ (2M,withMayor’s office,Ndele,Mar17); ‘NGOs must facilitate dialogue; they can find a solution to restore our security’ (5M&2F,Youth,Ndele, Mar13). As a group of local officials asserted, ‘we cannot talk directly with the armed groups; we rely on the ICRC to negotiate with them’ (2M,MayorsOffice;Ndele,Mar18). Indeed, Mahony and Nash suggest that because these actors are ‘working close to where abuses happen’ they are able to engage directly with daily advocacy for protection (2012, p.134). Thus, accepting the challenge to ‘socialise’ armed actors directly within the micro spaces, the ICRC claims to work ‘to strengthen compliance and foster accountability in the thick of armed conflict’ (2013b, p.14).⁸³

⁸³ With the ICRC mandate and mission statement explaining that ‘States gave the ICRC the responsibility of monitoring the faithful application of international humanitarian law’ (2009, p.7), Sandoz reminds us that they are considered by many as the ‘guardian of humanitarian law’ (1998).

Working deeply within the micro spaces of conflict zones, they describe their approach as being 'based on the concept of the rule of law' but giving it 'practical relevance' through trying to 'encourage parties to stop committing IHL violations while they are actually occurring and trying to prevent imminent IHL violations from occurring' (ICRC 2007b). Directly emulating the norm diffusion model, they try to 'persuade them to change their behaviour' (ICRC 2008a, p.760).

As such, the on-set of the violence in CAR saw the ICRC ramping up their efforts to 'remind' the various armed actors 'of their responsibilities under IHL' (ICRC 2012b, p.111). Similarly, with the eruption of violence in South Sudan in late 2013, the ICRC immediately called upon 'all parties to the conflict to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law' (ICRC 2013d). Given that these discursive efforts takes place both at the capital level as well as in the deeply rural localities, they have the potential to more directly influence the dynamics of violence to which people at risk are exposed in the micro spaces.

However, recalling discussions from chapter two, a reliance on IHL as the normative framework limits this in that it is concerned, by definition only with organized parties to the conflict, and thus has nothing to say about so-called 'unorganized' or 'informal' (eg: banditry, or civilian-on-civilian) violence. Indeed, the international community was stymied in December 2013 when the violence in CAR ratcheted up due to direct civilian participation. With IHL as the singular normative reference, the best a senior UN analyst could suggest was an appeal to the Security Council to 'remind *all parties to the conflict* of their responsibilities under International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law and to ensure that all those responsible for violations are held to account' (UN News Centre 2014a) – this despite the fact that a good portion of the violence at that point was perpetrated by ad hoc vigilante groups who had no relationship with organized armed groups – and were thus not bound by IHL.

Further, as discussed earlier, the fact that socialization efforts rely upon behaviour change, such intervention are thus largely aspirational – and thus slow to achieve results despite the urgency of imminent deadly threat. As such, it is relevant that many analysts point to a complementary dimension of the humanitarian protection effort which, rather than emphasising the armed actors and their conduct of hostilities, focuses more directly on the individual at risk, aiming to reduce the vulnerabilities of civilian populations (Metcalf 2012, p.1; see also: Fenton&Loughna 2013, p.4; ICRC 2012a, pp.29–31; Sassoli 2002, p.402). As Mahony and Nash say, with their proximity with people at risk, these actors are also 'crafting solutions to human rights problems' (2012, p.134). The next section examines how this takes shape in acutely violent FPZs.

5.3 Concrete Protection – Directly translating global protection norms

By definition, humanitarian action is undertaken in some of the most difficult operating environments in the world. Thus, while the above authority-centric discursive efforts are grounded in IHL as the global normative framework, the normative framework that is translated through concrete humanitarian action reflects a profound narrowing of the global promise of protection. For example, as the iconic humanitarian agency, the ICRC mission statement claims that their ‘exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence’ (2009b; see also ICRC 2009a, p.4). *Médecins Sans Frontières* similarly explains that ‘at its core, the purpose of humanitarian action is to save the lives and ease the suffering of people caught in acute crises’ MSF is destined to work in such contexts (MSF n.d.).

In this, these actors locate themselves within some of the most difficult operating environments possible. Further, although these concrete substitutive efforts are often described as ‘rights-based’, they are typically rather driven by the above mentioned ‘humanitarian imperative’ and the associated moral obligation to act. For example, the UN global protection cluster states that the prime motivation for humanitarian work is ‘to save lives and to prevent and alleviate human suffering, *wherever it is found*’ (GPCWG 2010, p.15 emphasis added). Thus, despite the fact that armed peacekeeping forces have proven unable to do so, achieving and sustaining ‘presence and proximity to affected populations’ is seen by sector experts as ‘the prerequisite of effective humanitarian action’ (Egeland *et al.* 2011, p.2; see also: Mahony & Nash 2012, p.11).

This begins to explain why such importance is given to claims by humanitarian actors regarding their capacity to access and exist within these zones. For example, a UNOHCHR sponsored humanitarian review led by humanitarian heavyweight Jan Egeland, entitled ‘*Stay and Deliver*’ claims that ‘humanitarians will rush to the neediest irrespective of circumstances’ (Egeland *et al.* 2011, p.viii). Acknowledging the risks, the report goes on to say that even ‘as the danger and difficulty of a humanitarian mission increases’ international humanitarian organisations ‘will be on the scene and operational in the very first days of a crisis’ (Ibid, p.3).

Articulating the implicit assertion, Mahony and Nash suggest that *an operational presence* in such zones is in itself ‘the embodiment on the ground of the stated human rights commitments of all UN member states’ (2012, p.5). Thus, reflecting observations by Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford that the operationalization of ideas in such contexts cannot always be made to match the theory (2005, p.209), in those contexts in which

people face extremely grave risk and are most in need of global protection norms delivering on their promise, protection is translated as the simple presence of NGOs.

However, even this extremely minimalist translation of the global promise often proves unachievable in FPZs. Firstly, many analysts point to ‘the rising security threat faced by humanitarian workers on ground’ (Ashdown *et al.* 2011, pp.i–ii; see also: Stoddard *et al.* 2006, p.1). Indeed, despite the above encouragement to ‘stay and deliver’, even Egeland *et al.* acknowledge that diverse sources of violence ‘undermine humanitarian action with impunity’ (2011, p.iii; see also: Duffield 2012, p.478; see also: Borenstein 2014). Thus, even if proximity is gained, the complexities of the operating environment lead to an extremely narrowed margin of manoeuvre.

Nevertheless, humanitarian programming in FPZs can be categorized along two broad lines, both building on the proximity gained. The first seeks to reduce ‘their vulnerability and/or their exposure to risks’ (ICRC 2008a, p.752); while the second seeks to address after the fact, the ‘physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion’ (ICRC 2011a, p.30). As such, the following sub-sections examine the challenges of implementing a range of humanitarian protection activities within acutely violent FPZs. This includes efforts to improve physical security; protecting by presence; acting in solidarity; and empowerment of people at risk.

5.3.1 NGOs as Primary Providers of Physical Protection

As discussed in the previous chapter, threats to physical security are often the most urgent protection issues in FPZs. The failures of mandated state institutions and armed peacekeepers to ensure physical protection have also been demonstrated. Thus recalling the substitutive role that INGOs are often assumed to play, NGOs, human rights organisations and international bodies are often touted as playing a significant security sector role (Bearne *et al.* 2005, p.iii; see also: Ogata & Sen 2003, p.6). This is particularly encouraged by donors funding such activities. For example, building on claims that the humanitarian effort seeks ‘to minimise threats of violence, coercion and deprivation’ ECHO asserts that humanitarian protection action aims ‘to enhance physical and psychological security or, at least, to reduce insecurity, for persons and groups under threat’ (2009, p.4).⁸⁴

As such, some humanitarian actors equally assert that ‘[p]rotection is about improving the safety of people’, with Oxfam for example claiming that humanitarian protection is concerned with ‘proactively helping people stay safer’ (Rand *et al.* 2008,

⁸⁴ Pantuliano exposes this as abdication of political responsibility, stating that it is due to ‘political inaction’ that donors funding this type of protection action are spurring the humanitarian actors on, pushing them ever deeper into acutely violent contexts (2014).

p.31). However, as non-coercive actors, it seems fairly apparent that meaningful substitution by humanitarian actors as providers of physical protection is likely to be negligible.

Nevertheless, expectations are established, carrying significant weight in the micro spaces precisely because these NGOs are often the only external actors present. In South Sudan this was illustrated in the countless expressions of profuse relief on the return of NGOs to the rural areas after being evacuated due to insecurity.⁸⁵ In one rural community that had suffered repeated armed attacks, a group of community leaders explained that ‘now the NGOs are here; this is good; it reassures people’ (5M,leaders,Koch,Dec10). Others added that ‘now when people see the NGOs, they are very happy; they know they are the ones who protect them; it is only NGOs who protect us now’ (1M,youngTrans,Koch,Dec04); ‘we are protected by these organizations’ (1F,IDPGanyiel,Nov 07); ‘the main protection we have is from NGOs; they are here to save the lives of the community against any dangers’ (1M,eng@market,Koch,Dec04).

In CAR, the role of INGOs was acknowledged in relation to the collapsing state, with respondents asserting that ‘the state does nothing; we can only hope for NGOs; the NGOs must help us’ (1M,dkElderPastor,SiteA,Zemio,Dec28). Local leaders explained that ‘without the FACA, gendarmerie, or police to protect us, what can we do; we have courage with NGOs here, we depend on them’ (2M,CdQ&Sage,Kabo,Feb07); ‘we are counting on the foreigners; they are protection for us; we depend on them being among us’ (1M,CdG,Osman,Zemio,Dec20).

People in the community hoped that ‘NGOs can help protect the population’ (1M,Merchant,Zemio,Dec20), while other more definitively claimed that ‘NGOs are here to protect the population; we count on them; they must intervene’ (1M,SGMayor,Ndele,Mar 11); ‘protection of the people is the responsibility of the NGOs’ (1F,IDPlady@ husbands’ house,Zemio,Dec17).

However, the incapacity of NGO’s to protect in concrete terms was repeatedly exposed. In one case, following assertions by Bangura, the SRSG for sexual violence in armed conflict that ‘the establishment of simple tools such as emergency hotlines and coordinated rapid response mechanisms can save lives’ (2014a, p.4), an INGO in Bangui established such a ‘hotline’. But failing to be linked to any form of follow-up capacity, the service proved to be an extremely painful means of documenting acute violations as they unfolded – but provided nothing in terms of concrete protection. Despite their being touted as the ‘provider of last hope’, there is no escaping the incapacity of humanitarian actors to

⁸⁵ These NGOs were again forced to flee these areas at a later date due to the cyclic nature of the on-going violence.

ensure the physical protection of people confronting the risks of acute armed violence. Paradoxically, this is widely noted.

5.3.1.1 Recognising Limitations

Reporting that ‘2013 set a new record for violence against civilian aid operations’ (2014, p.iii), Stoddard *et al.* note that ‘worsening conditions of lawlessness’ contributed to increased security incidents ‘targeting aid workers and their assets’ in both South Sudan and CAR (2014, p.2). The AU and UN also report repeated ‘deplorable attacks against humanitarian personnel’ (African Union 2013a, para.59; see also: Muna 2014 pp.121-123; UNMISS 2014, p.3; UN News Centre 2014a; UNSG 2013a, p.5) in both cases. As a very concrete example of this, the INGO with which I was hosted in CAR, suffered multiple attacks and lootings in multiple locations, forcing the teams to repeatedly withdraw from their operating sites.⁸⁶

Local communities are very well aware of such events. While local officials observed that ‘the NGO was ransacked; it has been reduced to zero’ (2M,MayorsOffice; Ndele,Mar18), others noted the equalizing effect of vulnerability, stating somewhat ironically that ‘now we are all victims together; we share the misfortunes’ (1M&1F,Son of CdG,Ndele,Mar12). Having been badly beaten by armed actors himself, another local leader emphasised that ‘everyone suffers in these times; everyone is a victim’ (1M,CdQ, Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11).

It is in this sense that Dubois notes that ‘when people need protection most – at the point of attack – our security restrictions virtually eliminate the possibility of our presence’ (2009, p.5: see also Collinson & Duffield 2013, p.3; Duffield 2010, p.5; Smirl 2015, p.65). INGOs simply will not tolerate such extreme levels of risk.

This in itself creates another dimension of anxiety for the local communities, with respondents repeatedly indicating that ‘we worry that the NGOs will leave suddenly when they have these problems’ (1M,PresIslamicCommittee,Ndele,Mar09). These worries left many wondering ‘what will we do for protection if the NGOs leave’ (1FMuslim,Fear@DRC; Ndele,Mar13). Officials worried that ‘if they leave, this will cause the population to panic’ (2M,MayorsOffice;Ndele,Mar18). A group of former civil servants stressed that ‘if the NGOs leave us, the population will suffer under the rebels’ (3M,GovFunctionairesIDPs @Fomac;Ndele,Mar14). Others similarly added that ‘if the NGOs leave us now, we don’t

⁸⁶ During my stay in Ndele, late one night armed assailants scaled the razor-wire trimmed fence of the NGO compound and stole two remaining motor bikes. Two 4X4 land-cruisers had already been stolen in similar attacks a month earlier. In another location, only one day after my departure a colleague was badly beaten when armed men came to steal the 4X4 vehicle and money he had on-hand to pay staff salaries.

know how we will continue' (2M&3F, Youth, Ndele, Mar12). As such, respondent repeatedly underlined that 'we don't want the NGOs to leave' (1M&1F, Pastor Baptiste-onhill, Ndele, Mar15).

In their desperation to ensure the NGOs remained on ground, respondents expressed exceptional concern for the NGO's risk, explaining that 'we ask God to look after them, to bring them courage' (2F, wives Muslim, Ndele, Mar12); 'they must not be discouraged; they must continue their work here' (2M&3F, Youth, Ndele, Mar12); 'they must have courage; they must continue without fear; keep trying to do their work; we depend on them' (1M, CdQ, building house, Ndele, Mar15); 'they must forget what has happened, and keep working for the population' (2M, Mayors Office, Ndele, Mar18).

However, in recognising that 'NGOs themselves are being looted now' some observed that 'now even these NGOs have nothing to do' (1M&1F, Pastor Baptiste on-hill, Ndele, Mar15). In acknowledging the vulnerability of NGOs, people were forced to acknowledge their impotence. For example, the above mentioned community leader who had been beaten wondered 'what force do the NGOs have now; they are also at risk' (1M, CdQ, Saraonion, Ndele, Mar11). With a group of women leaders noting that 'now NGOs are alone; they do not carry arms; without the Gendarmerie what can they do for us?' (4F, DRC-CPF, Kobo, Feb05), others concluded that 'NGOs don't protect people' (1M, on top of hill, Zemio, Dec17).

Commentators agree, reiterating the fact that '[h]umanitarians do not carry arms' (Dubois 2008, p.12). With Fenton and Loughna arguing that being non-coercive, humanitarian protection actors 'are not in a position to provide physical protection' (2013, p.7), South *et al.* agree that 'providing physical security to civilians during periods of violence is beyond their remit' (2012, p.16). Adding that humanitarian protection 'should not be confused with the provision of physical safety' Dubois suggests that such claims only enhance the 'gap between the promise of protection and its realisation' (2008, p.12). Nevertheless, while accepting this aspect of non-coercion, some such analysts insist that humanitarian protection actors 'may be able to effect a reduction in the threats faced by civilian populations' (Fenton & Loughna 2013, p.7). Some argue that the simple presence of NGOs in FPZs provides a protective impact.

5.3.2 Protection by Presence

Proponents of the strategy of 'protection by presence' claim that an 'international presence' can protect people at risk by influencing the dynamics of the conflict and more specifically by deterring attacks (ECHO 2009, p.12; Mahony 2006, p.13; Mahony & Nash 2012, p.13; Rand *et al.* 2008, p.31). From the micro perspective, it is evident that

individuals at risk also regularly count on this protective potential in their efforts to keep themselves safe.

For example, as a national staff member of an INGO explained in CAR, 'I left my wife and children in the house of my big sister because she works for MSF; I thought they were safe there because the rebels know that it is very bad to disturb people working with NGOs' (1M, DRCparajurist,Batangafo,Feb23). In another case, a staff member said that when her town was overrun by armed rebels she had attempted to hide on the compound of an INGO, explaining that 'I thought the rebels would not be able to come in there'. However, on reaching the compound, she found that the armed assailants were already inside 'destroying and looting things', leaving her to conclude that 'I could do nothing after that; I could only flee with the others to the bush' (1F,Vero,Ndele,Mar13). Clearly, counting on the very fragile promise of protection which is a presumed corollary of NGO presence could prove to be deadly.

Even more fragile was the fairly widely referenced strategy of fleeing to INGO supported hospital grounds. The widely described assumption on which the potential for protection was pinned, was that armed actors would not enter these compounds because of the 'no fire-arms' logos pasted on the gates as standard practice of INGOs working in conflict zones. An important number of individuals vested hope in this fantastically thin promise of protection with a knowledgeable elder woman explaining that in her community 'many people fled to the hospital because the sign on gate prevents the rebels from entering; the rebels know that they cannot enter; they cannot touch the people inside that gate; they realize that this is prohibited; so the people inside the hospital compound thought they could be safe' (1F,olderlady,MSFhusband, Batangafo,Feb23).

Thus, beyond on the profoundly weak assumption that the presence of a foreigner can avert disaster, this particular protection strategy is constructed on the power of a sticker. Indeed, capturing the paradox, a local medical staff explained that because the rebels continue house-to-house looting, harassment and abuses every night, 'people come to sleep on the hospital grounds; they feel safer here than in their homes' (1M,NGO, NatStaff,Kabo,Feb12).⁸⁷ The likelihood that any such symbols influenced the behaviour of these armed actors is slim at best.

In this we see that it is not only the global protection vision that desperately hopes that armed actors will respect normative standards. This hope equally permeates the micro level protection vision as well, with individuals constructing independent protection

⁸⁷ An International Commission of Inquiry investigated specific cases in which armed groups entered hospitals and killed individuals who reportedly had been there seeking refuge (Muna 2014, p.120).

strategies around such ‘assurances’ of safety. Confronted with a dearth of protective options, the irony that ‘threateners’ who were perpetuating widespread abuses, displaying little respect for protection norms in general, were now expected to respect the norms depicted in the ‘no fire-arms allowed’ stickers was stubbornly ignored.

Although the hospital strategy proved functional in these particular instances, hospitals in general were frequently the target of armed attacks in both CAR (Aljazeera 2013c; MSF 2015; Muna 2014, p.120; UNSG 2013d, p.10) and South Sudan (Aljazeera 2014; MSF 2013; UNMISS 2014, p.54), thus underlining the risks inherent in such false promises; which if tested, could cost people their lives.⁸⁸ However, false promises are not the only risk that NGOs pose for people at risk.

An NGO presence itself sometimes aggravates protection risks. This is especially related to the above discussed monitoring role. With Mahony pointing out that reprisals against civilians by those perpetrating violent abuses are ‘one of the least costly ways’ of controlling local populations (2006, p.110; see also: Anderson 1999; ICRC 2013c, p.87; The Sphere Project 2011, p.33), such monitoring activities can provoke retaliations against either the NGO and/or the population at risk.

Various respondents noted risks associated with talking to foreigners, an elder community leader in South Sudan explaining that ‘the big ones will come to me after speaking to you; they will demand to know what was said; they can oppress us’ (1M,OldChief,near Wau,Sept06).⁸⁹ Similarly, a Christian respondent located in a majority Muslim quartier in Bangui declined an interview, explaining that his neighbours may resent his speaking to a foreigner (and implicitly retaliate). As one of the CdQ who had been a target of such violent retaliations by an armed group underlined, ‘the one who speaks will be visited in the night by these ones with guns’ (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar 11).

As such, even Mahony, as a strong proponent of the ‘protection by presence’ approach, admits that its impact ‘is incremental, not total’ (2006, p.20). While accepting that it is ‘not a panacea’, he tentatively concludes that an ‘international presence will *probably* make a positive difference to civilian security in most conflict settings’ (Ibid p.34, emphasis added). As such, there is no avoiding the profound limitations that INGOs face in efforts to shield people at risk from imminent deadly threats of violence. Indeed, Dubois observes that in fact ‘much of the protection work of humanitarians deals with the post-violence lives of the victims’ (2009, p.5). As part of the second broad line of humanitarian

⁸⁸ Following direct and intentional attacks at a later date, MSF as the foreign presence fostering the impression of safety, was forced to withdraw from these very hospitals (MSF 2014; MSF 2015).

⁸⁹ In one rural South Sudan location, a 22 year woman who had been working as my interpreter was held for four hours by the ‘Intelligence Wing’ of the armed group in control of that area, being questioned on the work she was doing.

protection activities, these efforts are rather concerned with helping people at risk to cope with the consequences of their inevitable exposure. The following looks at psycho-social activities as an example.

5.3.3 Protection as Psycho-social Support

Although the NGO capacity to ensure physical protection is limited, some commentators emphasise the positive psychological impact of NGO presence. For example, ECHO claims that NGOs inspire confidence among communities at risk (2009, p.12; see also: Mahony & Nash 2012, p.63; The Sphere Project 2011, p.30). Respondents themselves widely highlighted this impact. For example, lacking even the most essential resources after having been looted by armed actors and looking very defeated by their circumstances, a household of women explained that 'with NGOs listening to our problems; our fear diminishes a bit; we have more courage to continue' (3F,poor,@base,Ndele,Mar09). A number of community leaders, many of whom shoulder the significant weight of their deeply distressed communities expressed similar sentiments stating that 'NGOs talking to us about these worries gives us comfort; it increases our morale; we have the courage to keep going' (3M,CdQ,Christ,Ndele,Mar13). As one such leader stated, 'if they were not among us, we would not be at ease in these difficulties' (1M,CdG,Osman,Zemio,Dec20).

A particularly inspiring respondent suffering with motor paralysis due to a chronic disease emphasised the important psychological boost that NGOs provide when they circulate through violence-affected communities. Having been a civil servant with the Bozizzé regime, this man was under imminent Séléka threat. Nevertheless, despite constraints imposed by his medical condition, he somehow managed to survive repeated attacks on his neighbourhood. However, in this, he had observed some extreme brutalities. As such, while noting that 'when we see these things we lose hope; people have lost their courage', he explained that an NGO presence assures people that 'others are thinking of us, this gives us courage; when you come to talk to us; listen to our experiences you restore our morale; we can see that we are not abandoned; someone cares for us'. Stating that 'NGOs give us courage' he emphasised that 'here a person must have courage, you must have hope to survive' (1M,paralyzed,Cite-II,Aug07). In this sense he was adamant that the presence of NGOs is 'life-saving'.

Despite the above indications of *hope* for concrete protection, when pressed, many respondents expressed few expectations of NGOs beyond solidarity. As a woman who was clearly feeling the fear stated, 'NGOs help to diminish our worries; with this we can live easier' (1F,Muslim,fear@DRC;Ndele,Mar13). In this sense, a leader in Bangui who

had been singled out for repeated harassment by the Séléka explained that ‘when we see that you are here, we regain hope’ (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug03). With others reiterating that ‘with foreigners here, we have hope’ (1M,IDPnative,Zemio,Jan10), it is apparent that bolstering courage and hope is often the main impact of the NGO presence. Taking this psychological impact further, some NGOs present psycho-social support as a translation of protection.

5.3.3.1 Psycho-Social Activities

Defined as ‘an event or situation that causes great distress and disruption’ (Free Dictionary 2013), trauma is a significant consequence of prolonged exposure to potentially deadly threat. With the Sphere Project noting that ‘some of the greatest sources of vulnerability and suffering in disasters arise from the complex emotional, social, physical and spiritual effects of disasters’ (2011, p.17), it is apparent that direct personal experiences and the witnessing of on-going horrors have left the survivors deeply affected in both crises. It is in this sense that Fierke suggests that a ‘trauma’ lens provides insight into the ‘toxic effect of violence on the individual mind’ (2007, p.126).

As an elder man in CAR noted, ‘we have no calm thoughts; this is causing moral illnesses’ (1M,IDPsSite-A,Zemio,Dec28). Similarly, noting that she worries about the rebels every day, a woman explained that ‘this is causing me bad health; the trauma is causing me a loss of morale’ (1F,Catherine,Site-A,IDPsZemio,Dec28). Indeed, reflecting conclusions by Walsh that ‘when people are going through a traumatic experience, crisis intervention and debriefing can be valuable’ (2003, p.58), some respondents underlined that ‘now people are deeply traumatized; we need NGOs to discuss our fears and troubles; to exchange ideas about this’ (2M&2F,IDPsSite-A,Zemio,Dec28).

Respondents in South Sudan equally widely noted the psychological impact of this crisis, suggesting that ‘people are traumatized; they are disturbed now’ (3M,Orient,Juba-PoC,Oct28). A Pastor in a Juba PoC-site explained that ‘people have lost too much; some have forgotten their lives; people are traumatized; they have lost hope; some have even tried to kill themselves; they need help to be calm’ (1M,Pastor,Juba-PoC,Oct28). Illustrating the psychological distress, when describing the horrors that they had experienced, a woman became very agitated when I asked for more specifics, asking me to ‘just leave out these causes of death and the killing; we just don’t want to remember all these bad things’ (2F,interestedTea-shop,Koch,Dec08). Similarly, a woman exhibiting apparent signs of depression explained that ‘after they killed my husband, I sent the children to the bush; but I stayed because I wanted them to kill me as well’ (4F,mixed,

Koch,Dec06). These traumatic experiences have undoubtedly left an immense psychological impact.

People were often dealing with dramatic levels of daily existential distress. For example, a partial-sited elderly woman, responsible for five small grandchildren explained in her shaking and feeble voice, explaining that 'I am an old lady; I worry about the insecurity; every day I think about these problems; I wonder how we will survive'. In a distant voice, she adds that 'my children are far away; I don't know if they really are alive'. Clinging to her walking stick, she described fears of re-attacks, explaining that 'the fear is always there; I don't know if the government forces will come again; if they do we can just run; we are fearing a lot; they can come again and do the same thing' (1F,elderly with grandkids,Leer,Oct23). As another woman in the same community added, 'it is now a full year that people have been worrying; when the situation is so bad, people become traumatized' (1F,Good-coms-eng,Leer,Oct25).

Thus, although the Sphere Project emphasises the importance of organising 'locally appropriate mental health and psychosocial supports that promote self-help, coping and resilience among affected people' (2011, p.17), NGO activities emphasising this 'softer' dimension of protection as psychological well-being is criticised by many. Fassin and Rechtman for example, argue that this is a 'medicalisation' of what is fundamentally a political problem (2009, p.xi). Indeed, describing it as a form of 'therapeutic governance', Pupavac adds that the psycho-social model pathologises distressed individual, presenting them both as vulnerable and 'unable to function' (2001, p.365). In pointing out that the subject becomes 'the pre-political frail, vulnerable victim who must be protected and enabled through therapeutic intervention' (Ibid, p.360), we are reminded of the passive victim to which the global protection regime responds.

As opposed to being about the 'empowerment of the individual citizen' (Ignatieff , 2001, p.18; Moravcsik 2000, p.217; Pupavac 2005, p.55; Robinson 1998, p.46), or assisting people 'to claim their rights' (OHCHR 2005, p.2; The Sphere Project 2011, p.30; Rand *et al.* 2008, p.7), Pupavac argues that this psychological approach to protection reframes rights as 'custodianship rather than freedoms' (2001, p.360). At the same time, within such contexts that combine a near total failure of formal institutions with on-going deadly violence, these softer impacts cannot be dismissed. But locating them in relation to the question driving this research, do they constitute any form of translation of global protection norms?

Making this seem fairly unlikely, some respondents described the NGO effort as 'a good gesture'. With a group of Muslim men in CAR appreciating the fact that 'NGOs have

the respect to come to discuss our problems; they make the effort' (7M,ArdouPeuhle, Zemio,Jan05), a group of Christian women added that 'it is good news that NGOs are here; thanks to them for coming from their homes to talk to us here, it is a good gesture' (5F,Christians,Kabo1,Feb14).

In this, the moral drive of the 'humanitarian imperative' that pushes NGOs to 'just do something' leads to the global promise of protection being translated as the offering of psychological comfort. The more comprehensive global promise of protection is utterly obscured. Is protection in FPZs inevitably reduced to a therapeutic comfort or a good-will gesture? Is this what Freeman has in mind in his claim that people appeal to human rights at the point that legal institutions fail (2002, p.10)? Is this what moral rights translate as in such contexts?

These impossibly minimalist manifestations of protection sit in glaring contrast to assertions by commentators that human rights are about the 'empowerment of the individual citizen' (Ignatieff 2001, p.18; Moravcsik 2000, p.217; Pupavac 2005, p.55; Robinson 1998, p.46). In fact the contradiction raises the question: is this tension dissipated simply by the fact that people at risk are unaware of their so-called '*inalienable*' rights? With Mahony asserting that 'civilian integrity and human rights are most readily respected, protected and fulfilled when people and communities are strong enough to assert and claim their rights' (2006, p.24), does protection only manifest concretely when people are able to claim their rights?

5.4 Claiming Rights – Socializing individuals

Orend stresses that making rights real has to do with ensuring that 'the right-holder actually possesses the object of his right-claim' (2002, p.28; See also: Kuper 2005, p.ix). However, as a legal expert in South Sudan argued, for human rights to work 'there must be knowledge' (2M,SSLS,Juba,Oct04). In contrast, a group of Muslim women in CAR stated that 'if someone wants to do something bad against us, we don't know if that one has received an order to do so or if they have a right to harm us; we don't know these things' (2F,Muslim,CamNord,July31), illustrating that as much as states need to be socialized into 'appropriate behaviour' vis-à-vis the global normative framework, the citizenry also require similar support.

It is in this sense that Robinson suggests that human rights language 'directly empowers people' in that 'it tells people at the grass-roots level that they have rights' (1998, p.48). As discussed in chapter three, for rights-holders to make claims on their rights, they must know they exist. Without this awareness, a violence battered community

facing prolonged exposure to imminent deadly threat is more likely to simply tolerate, being appreciative of even the smallest goodwill gestures as discussed above – regardless of how far this falls below internationally promised standards of protection. But to what extent do these global norms penetrate into the micro spaces of FPZs in this form?

5.4.1 Vernacularization – Translating global norms into local spaces

Although much of the discussion so far has concerned translation of global norms from their globally articulated ideational form into a concrete impact in the lives of individuals in the micro spaces of FPZs, the above alludes to the importance of these ideas penetrating micro spaces also in their ideational form. Given claims of universality, the implicit assertion is that people are universally aware of and accept these norms and are somehow governed in relation to them. It is assumed that there is a common understanding of these global norms. But, just how are people made aware of these ideas in such acute contexts that are characterised by poor access to formal education, high rates of illiteracy, and dramatically constrained access to information?

From the macro perspective, there are strong assumptions that the important norms are those that are translated ‘downward’ from the global to the local (Merry 2005, p.216). This implies that the micro spaces are somehow norm-neutral, awaiting and indeed being fully receptive to globally articulated normative wisdom. However, in tracing the top-downward transmission of so-called universal rights, Acharya argues that global norms do not simply supplant existing local frameworks (2004, pp.239–240; see also: Checkel 1999), but rather become ‘localized’ by ‘local agents’ (Ibid, p.239; also see Checkel 1999; Cortell & Davis 1996). Merry describes this as ‘vernacularization’ by local ‘translators’ (2005, pp.1 & 216; see also: Speed 2007, pp.165–184; Goldstein 2007, pp.51–74; Goodale 2007b, p.144).

Thus, although some ‘top-down/bottom-up’ ideational contestation is acknowledged, oddly it is generally argued that the core ideas of global norms are not altered (Merry 2005, p.216; Goodale 2007b, p.144). While vernacularization is recognised as a complicated process, the original integrity of these so-called ‘universal concepts’ is assumed to be preserved as they penetrate into the local spaces. However, recalling the above discussion that the translation of ideas into action ‘is often a partial, unpredictable, and haphazard process’ (Wilson 2007, p.357), this section looks at if and how globally articulated protection norms have reached individuals in micro spaces.

With human rights training now being considered ‘a classic tool’ of protection (Mahony & Nash 2012, p.25; see also: Ban Ki-moon 2012; OHCHR 2013a; Rand *et al.* 2008, p.31), respondents in both CAR and South Sudan pointed to INGOs as the primary

vehicle for the delivery of information on rights. For example, a local observer in South Sudan stated that 'if local people hear about rights, it is the NGOs who are getting some kind of word out' (1M,INGO,NatStaff, Rumbek,Sept26). Others agreed that 'it is the NGOs who talk to us about rights' (4F,Women in Bor,Oct08). Similarly, a mayor in CAR noted that 'it is only the NGOs bringing these ideas here' (1M,Mayor,Mboki,Jan18). Others added that 'these ideas have been introduced for the past year by NGOs' (1M,Pastor,Mboki,Jan19). Indeed, in comparatively less acute contexts, people were appreciative of this effort, noting that 'with NGOs people now have access to this information' (1F,Gastric Lady,Zemio,Dec18); 'people can know their rights; they can learn about the responsibilities of the authorities' (1M,Pastor Apostolique,Dec21,Zemio).

But many lament the fact that information on such issues is patchy, especially in rural areas. Reflecting Hopgood's observation that 'there is nothing self-evident about the meaning of human rights at all' (2006, p.215), respondents describe seemingly random dissemination processes, and thus partial understandings. For example, a group of female IDPs in CAR indicated that 'some people came to talk to us about this a long time ago, we don't know who they were; they talked of these things, but we have not mastered these ideas; they said that people should be polite, respect others, avoid insulting people, avoid causing problems' (3F,Site-C,Zemio,Jan09). Others simply stated that 'NGOs talk about these things but we don't know what it is' (3F,locals,Mboki,Jan22).

In South Sudan, NGO and UN awareness raising on human rights issues is also widely acknowledged, with a women's leader underlining that 'people in the community are very interested to learn about their rights' (1F,Director@Woman'sLeague,Raja,Sept10), another woman added that 'people are becoming more aware through education from NGOs' (1F,Women'sCBO,Wau,Sept05).

However, people particularly pointed to the lack of details made available through similarly ad hoc and random dissemination processes. For example, two elderly community leaders noted that 'we have received some human rights training; but we did not go into details; we spoke about the constitution; we were told that such a thing exists; but since then we have heard nothing more' (2M,OldChief,Wau,Sept06). Claiming that 'we have heard of human rights', another group of Elders noted that 'the UN came here about a year ago; we had some small discussions' (7M,EldersCourt,Wau,Sept07). Recalling that 'UNMISS talked to us about Human Rights', a women's leader equally explained that 'they didn't give us any details; they promised to come and tell us more; but they have not yet returned since a year; we are still waiting for more details' (1F,Director@Woman'sLeague,

Raja,Sept10). As such, access to top-down information on human rights has proven to be extremely limited.

Moreover, despite this paucity of information, there is nevertheless an important horizontal dissemination process that takes place within the micro spaces. Those who are the first-line recipients of this top-down injection of information become the 'translators' (Merry 2005, p.210) within the local spaces. Commentators equally refer these local actors as 'change agents' (Bob 2010, p.183); 'knowledge brokers' (Wilson 2007, p.357); 'power brokers' (Riker 2002, p.188); and 'active mediators' (Boissevain 1974 cited in Bierschenk *et al.* 2002, p.12), with Bierschenk *et al.* pointing out that these individuals serve as the 'interface' or as 'go-betweens' (2002, pp.2–4) between 'different world-views and knowledge systems' (Mosse & Lewis 2006, p.10).

Given the rarity of individuals well-informed on these global ideas, it is often quite a diversity of individuals who assume this translation role, typically taking on what Mosse and Lewis describe as 'unscripted, informal, personalized, and highly unstable' roles (2006, p.13) through which these global normative ideas are 'vernacularised'. In some cases these individuals are NGO staff. However, in deeply rural areas, these individuals are often locally recruited. Despite typically having no relevant theoretical background, they nevertheless usually receive little more than minimal training. As an INGO national legal advisor in South Sudan observed, 'it is these people who are now translating national laws for people who don't read or write; they try to talk to people in a way they can understand; they go to rural areas to promote human rights not really knowing what they are promoting' (1M,INGONatStaff,Rumbek,Sept26). This partial delivery of human rights information is only the start of what is a very complex information replication process that unfolds horizontally throughout the local community.

For example, while explaining that 'the mayor announced human rights in a public gathering' two brothers in a deeply rural locality in CAR said that the mayor had 'encouraged the people who know of these ideas to inform and advise others' (2M, BothersNearCompound,Boguilla,Dec02). Others suggested that 'the main way people collect such information is by moving around and discussing with others' (1F&1M,poor lady&sonBoguilla,Dec07). As one woman said, 'I hear about rights when people in the community are discussing together' (1F,YoungFrench-speaking,Boguilla, Dec02). Another indicated that 'I have heard of these from my husband; if I want to learn more I can ask my neighbours' (2F,mom&daughter bar,Zemio,Dec19).

In such dynamic processes, it is hard to imagine how the core ideas of these top-down norms would not be altered in this process. Both formal and informal translators

retransmit these ideas many times over. In many cases the translators are building their own understanding of such norms as they are ‘teaching’ or advising others – and indeed, they are often on their own, left to ‘make it up as they go’. As a UNHCR staff in CAR noted, ‘sometimes it is a bit like the blind leading the blind at the local level; those responsible for human rights and legal violations often don’t know these elements themselves’ (1M,UNHCR, CommunityServices;Zemio,Jan05).

As discussed in chapter three, these patchy processes leave people confused and uncertain about rights. As such, many demand concrete evidence of these normative ideas. As a member of a women’s group in South Sudan indicated, ‘we hear about human rights, but we don’t know exactly what they are; I want to know what human rights look like so I can understand what it is’ (1Fmember,Women’sAssociation,Raja,Sept10).⁹⁰ As one group of teenage school-girls agreed that ‘it has been announced on the radio that there are now human rights, but we have never seen them’ (3F,YoungWomen with mother, Rumbek,Sept20). Describing her daily challenges, another woman equally stated that ‘I hear about rights but I don’t really know what it is; people say it is there, but I don’t see it; government officials and NGOs talk of them, but I have never seen them’ (1F,Woman, Bor,Oct06).

Building on Hopgood’s observation that rights ‘get their meaning through practice’ (2006, p.215), a local NGO staff member responsible for rights training in his area explained that when he talks to the community ‘they challenge us; they ask “what do you mean; what is this concretely”’ (1M,INGO,NatStaff,Rumbek,Sept25). Without concrete evidence, many remain dubious about the idea of rights. Getting to the heart of this, a group of women asserted that if rights are ‘fake’, they were not interested (3F,near OXFAM-baseRumbek,Sept25).

5.4.2 Understanding Rights in Crisis

This scepticism was unsurprisingly compounded as the crises become more acute and concrete evidence of human rights became ever scarcer. For example, while claiming that ‘people here don’t know what rights are’ a religious leader in CAR was adamant that ‘but now we can say there are no human rights here’ (1M,PastorEpostolique,Ndele,Mar 11). A national staff of a protection NGO similarly stated that ‘at this moment, we cannot really talk of human rights; if we mention rights, people want to know what we can do concretely’ (1M,DRC-Parajurist,Batangafo,Mar12) – implicitly underlining the utter absence of the NGO capacity to concretely protect people in critical crisis.

⁹⁰ People were consistently curious, seeking more information, with a group of elderly men asking ‘where do they come from?’ (3M,old-men,nearAfex,Rumbek,Sept26); while a group of woman asked ‘what do human rights contain’ (5F,Women,Bor,Oct08).

In this, people within the micro spaces of FPZs are all too cognisant of the profound contradictions. Many grappled with the paradox of what proves to be a rhetorical promise of protection and the realities they experienced. As a local legal advisor for an INGO noted, ‘people are not convinced of rights in this time when they have no security’ (1M,DRC-Parajurist,Batangafo,Mar12). For example, a group of women in CAR noted that although ‘NGOs have told us that rights exist; today we have the opposite sense’ (18F, Christians on hill,Ndele,Mar15). While noting that ‘we have had many trainings on human rights from the NGOs’, a group of Muslim women in the same community similarly indicated confusion stating that ‘with the current events, our heads are troubled; we want to put these ideas into action, but when you see a Séléka beat a young boy, will you tell him that that child has rights and that he must not beat him; can we confront the ones carrying arms?’ (4F,Muslims@CdQhouse,Ndele,Mar14).

In fact, in acutely violent periods within FPZs nearly every basic right is challenged – most importantly the right to life. Institutions that are formally mandated to protect, if existing at all, fall tragically short of their obligations. Being all too aware of the failures of formal institutions, people at risk often turn to NGOs for protection with hopes that these civil society actors can somehow substitute for systemic failures of the state. However, although these actors are important in many ways, they are no substitute for the failing state protection apparatus. As Hafner-Burton says, these actors are important, but ‘governments are essential’ (2013, p.6).

As a national staff member of an INGO in South Sudan wondered ‘where are the human rights in that scenario – they are not really practical, they are not applicable to this environment’ (1M,INGONatStaff,Rumbek,Sept25). Indeed, quite the opposite to being empowered to claim their rights vis-à-vis any formal actor, such circumstances force people to look to independent means of protecting themselves. With two young men agreeing that ‘now it can only be you yourself who might be able to protect your own rights’ (2M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec09), so-called auto-protection emerges as the only viable protection option. This is explored in the following chapters.

5.5 Conclusions

Does humanitarian action serve as an alternative trajectory through which global protection norms can be translated into a concrete protective impact in the local spaces of TFZs? Many such actors claim to adopt a rights-based approach which implies their intention is to do exactly that. However, in concrete terms, their capacity to deliver on any such promises is inversely proportional to the magnitude of the threats posed.

Given that they are usually equally vulnerable to the threats inherent to such environments, they expressly reduce the promise of protection to the rather stark 'saving of lives' and 'alleviating suffering'. Further, they tie their effort to the moral underpinnings of the global protection framework, articulating this in the so-called 'humanitarian imperative'. With the driving impetus being grounded in the moral obligation to act, the effort becomes increasingly fixated on the challenge of remaining on ground and what is actually achieved becomes secondary from the macro perspective.

However, as non-coercive actors, their reliability in terms of delivering on even this narrowed promise is often negligible in acutely violent circumstances. Security constraints are often so severe, that these actors are able to achieve little more than basic presence. Although some equate this presence with protection, the reliability of any impact on this basis is the thinnest when it is most urgently needed – and its failure is likely to have deadly consequences for those who count on it. Thus although these actors work exceedingly close to the threshold between life and death, their capacity to deliver on even a very reduced promise of protection is unreliable. All too often, with nothing standing between them and the 'threatener', those living on this threshold are left fully exposed.

Although respondents clearly hoped for more, most were well aware of the limitations of protection as humanitarian action and thus actually expected little. In fact, from within their extremely precarious circumstances and sense of utter abandonment, the NGO presence is well appreciated even if largely sentimentally, with people explaining that 'when we see them, we are happy; they help us to have some ideas' (1M&1F,Pastor-on-hill,Ndele,Mar15); 'with NGOs here we can regain our courage to think of ways we can manage for a better future' (1M,CdQ-Runga,Kabo,Feb07). In this, these people are all too aware of the fact that such management of a better future entails their independent management of their daily protection needs. The actual responsibility to protect sits largely in their own hands, as explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6 : Protection as Defensive Auto-protection

'If rights existed, this would be a good thing, but they don't – we just have to protect ourselves' (2F&1M, Advisors to the CdQ, Castor, July 30).

6.1 Introduction

Global protection norms make a bold and universal promise. However in grim contrast, the previous chapters have demonstrated the extent to which both formal and informal institutions fail to translate this promise from its ideational form into concrete results for those very real people who occupy the micro spaces of armed conflict. In fact, as the acuity of protection threats escalates, the capacity of these institutions to deliver on the protection promise is exponentially eroded. In this vein, a group of women in South Sudan observed that 'with independence we had human rights; now we again have only war; there are no rights here now; now people are just responsible for themselves' (6F, IDPs@school,Ganyliel,Nov13). Insisting that 'human rights exist in theory but not in practice', a well-informed Pastor in CAR stated that 'we don't have any real protection here at this time; it is only theoretical; there is no reality of protection' (1M,Pastor,Mboki,Jan19). As such, this chapter shifts away from the tracing of the global-to-local trajectory of protection norms. It rather examines protection as auto-protection or protection generated through local options.⁹¹

Recalling Merry's suggestion that it is nonsensical to assume that people would rely on a system that has never fully delivered the necessary protection (2005, p.188), with little evidence indicating the contrary, respondents widely concluded that global protection norms simply do not apply to their contexts or to them personally. Agreeing that it would indeed be a good thing 'if rights existed', in their skepticism a group of educated youth in CAR stressed that 'with rights, people can't be just killed like this' (2F&1M,Castor,July30). Based on the brutal realities of their circumstances, these youth were thus adamant that 'on the paper rights are there; but they don't apply here; they don't exist', thus concluding that 'we just have to protect ourselves' (2F&1M,young-adults reflective,Castor,July30).

With the top-down institutional-based vision of protection being exposed as deeply fallible, Ghani and Lockhart point out that at-risk populations often simply give up on hopes of receiving protection from either the state or international substitutive actors (2009, p.20). For example, respondents in South Sudan explained that 'we are people without a government; people must look for themselves' (3M,Teachers,Ganyliel,Nov13); 'when the government is not providing enough protection to the population; people must do it

⁹¹ As a reminder, the terms 'auto-protection', 'self-protection' and 'resilience' are used relatively interchangeably.

themselves' (3M,reflections,Rumbek,Nov04); 'when you see that there is no government, you better look for your own security yourself; you have to defend yourself and your family' (1M,Koch,Dec07). Thus, as opposed to looking to the global promise of 'outside rescuers for protection' (Smyth 2000, p.132; see also: Pupavac 2001, p.360), people facing grave risk widely concluded that 'we need to protect ourselves' (5M,group of elder-men,Bor,Oct 05).

With little faith placed in the global promise of protection, these individuals were living Fierke's observation that in such circumstances individuals are often left to fend for themselves (2007, p.43; see also: Maroya 2003, p.269). Despite facing some of the most extreme protection crises, these people were all too aware that it was for them to devise their own means of protection. Many respondents acknowledged that 'there is no protection; people must do their own protection' (3M,CdQ,Christians,Ndele,Mar13); 'you have to depend on yourself for security; you do your own security for yourself' (1M,IDP-President,Ax-Zemio,Site-A,Mboki,Jan19).

This realisation was vividly illustrated by the internally displaced people (IDPs) located within the UNMISS PoC-site in Bor who were introduced in chapter four. Recalling that their PoC-site had been attacked by belligerents, with individuals seeking safety having been traumatised, wounded and even killed, those remaining in the PoC-site largely lost their confidence in the UNMISS promise of protection. As one young man stressed, 'here in the PoC it is not good for security; I want to leave because I am not feeling secure here' (1M,youth@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14). Indeed, the vast majority of respondents in the site expressed a very strong desire to return to their so-called 'places of origin'.

Repeating that 'the PoC has become very difficult' many concluded that 'now it is better for each of us to go to our own place to be with our families' (1M,@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14). Turning away from the top-down, state-centric, institution-heavy global protection promise, these people were rather putting their trust in local options, widely concluding that 'without peace, you can only decide to go back to your county' (1of6M,@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14); 'now there is no better place' (3M,Teacher,Eng@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14); 'I will find my family there; I can feel secure there with them' (1M,@round-table;Bor-PoC,Dec14).

But this was not based on wistful illusions. The people of South Sudan are by no means novices at auto-protection. As one man said, 'this is not the first time that people have lived through such experiences' (1M,Eng@Market,Koch,Dec04). With a local leader stating that 'we know there is no UN there' (1M,CourtFromLeer,Bor-PoC,Dec13), people were cognisant of the fact that formal protective institutions had long collapsed *and* that

overt conflict continued in and around their rural places of origin. Thus, consciously foregoing all promises of formal protection – most of which had proven to be little more than a false promise in any case – another young man added that ‘people cannot say that they prefer the PoC over their place of origin; there you will find your family; they will help you’ (1M,Young,greyscale t-Shirt;Bor-PoC,Dec14).

Thus, quite in contrast to Merry’s suggestion that people need to ‘dis-embed themselves from their informal protection mechanisms’ (2005, p.188), these individuals very pragmatically prioritised exactly these mechanisms. For example, arguing that as experts of their local land, they know how best to exploit it for self-protection, an elder community leader explained that ‘if there is any problem while I am there, I know where to run where the armed forces cannot find us’ (1M, courtFromLeer,Bor-PoC,Dec13). In fact, as the head of his family, he was desperate to return to help his family in their auto-protection efforts, adding that once there ‘if I have to run, I can run with my children; I want to be able to tell them where to go’ (1M,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

Nevertheless, expectations of actually achieving concrete physical protection were exceedingly low, with respondents being all too aware of the inadequacies of the scarce protection options available to them once in their places of origin. As one man said ‘no one can protect me there; but even without security, I can just stay there like all the others do’ (1M,sick,Bor-PoC,Dec14). In reality, rather than focusing on achieving protection in the sense of being shielded from danger, respondents rather underlined the importance of sharing the inevitable hardships with family, with a young man stating that ‘if we meet a big problem while we are there; those ones are my people; we will all exist there together as a group; my people will help me’ (1M,Youth Teacher@round-table,Bor-PoC,Dec14).

As a woman alone in the PoC-site with an infant indicated, her intent to return was driven far more by a longing to be reunified with her family than expectations of gaining physical protection. Indeed, far from imagining their place of origin as a utopia, she speculated that ‘the fighting will get worse’, but she nevertheless said that ‘I still want to go back; even if I will find problems there’ (1F,hungry-one,Bor-PoC,Dec13). As a senior community member explained, ‘even if the situation there is bad; even if there is no food there; you cannot stay in this place that is not your own’ (1M,red-shirt;Bor-PoC,Dec14). These people simply saw returning to their place of origin as a better option than remaining under UNMISS’s unreliable promise of protection.

In this case ‘better’ was not measured in relation to any aspirational promise of protection. It was rather defined in emotive terms. For example, because she had not heard if her parents were alive or dead since the on-set of the crisis one year earlier, one

young woman explained that ‘in those rural areas, there is no protection; but it is our place; if any problems get us there, they will find us together with our parents; at least we will be together’ (3F,Smokeshop,Bor-PoC,Dec14). Reflecting what Rancière describes as ‘life between life and death’ (2004, p.301),⁹² an elder man who was serving on the justice committee within the PoC added that ‘I want to get to my home; it is my place; if something bad catches me there I may die; but I will be there with my children; we can die together’ (1M,Justice,Bor-PoC,Dec13). While this sheds light on what protection as auto-protection looks like from a micro perspective, it has nevertheless increasingly been co-opted by the global protection regime.

6.1.1 Reimagining the Victim – From passive to an active agent

As sketched in the introductory chapters, the global protection regime responds to a ‘worthy’ victim, which is depicted as passive. However, in acknowledging the incapacity to operationalise global protection norms in FPZs, the global protection regime has been increasingly drawing on the inherent resilience of at-risk individuals, as sketched in the introductory chapter, ‘to “struggle well” in the face of adversity’ (Walsh 2003, p.52; see also: Castleden *et al.* 2011, p.369; Masten 2001, p.235; Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw 2008a, p.30; Windle 2010, p.1).⁹³ With ‘strengths under stress’ said to be ‘forged through dealing with adversity’ (Walsh 2003, p.52; see also: Windle 2010, p.1), exposure to ‘serious threat’ (Masten 2001, p.228; see also: Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw 2008a, p.31) is reframed as a positive event. Due to such exposure, a resilient community and/or individual is consequently presumed to be skilled at ‘making the best of the options available’ within the adversity they face (Christopolos & Farrington 2004, p.22).

This constitutes the essence of auto-protection, which although reflecting a dramatic narrowing of the global promise of protection is increasingly considered as a complement to top-down, institutional-based protection efforts. In fact, the UNOCHA Human Security Unit has drawn a distinction between ‘protection’ as a top-down (implicitly state-centric) process, and ‘empowerment’ as a bottom-up issue of human agency (2012, p.5).

While top-down *protection* is constructed in relation to the passive victim who needs saving (as discussed in earlier chapters), the notion of auto-protection is constructed on the notion of an *empowered* individual which has agency to act in their

⁹² This is in relation to his discussion of Agamben’s ‘bare life’ and Arendt’s ‘right to have rights’ (Rancière 2004)

⁹³ As discussed in the introductory chapter, resilience refers to the capacity of individuals or communities ‘to absorb shocks and still maintain function’ (Folke 2006, p.253; see also: Adger 2000, p.349; Hall & Lamont 2013, p.2; Walker *et al.* 2004, p.1).

world (Bandura 2006, p.164; see also: Fierke 2007, p.61; Giddens 1984, p.10; Nnaemeka 1997, p.3). Recalling that the resilience agenda effectively reframes exposure to deadly crisis as a positive opportunity, it also claims that resilience is inherent. For example, describing it is a 'common phenomenon' coming from so-called 'ordinary magic', Masten suggests that resilience is a 'result of ordinary rather than extraordinary processes' (2001, p.227; see also: Cundill *et al.* 2014, pp.6–7; Scheper-Hughes 2008, p.28; Walsh 2003, p.56). It is in this sense that Nnaemeka asserts that 'agency and victimhood are not mutually exclusive' (1997, p.3). It is on this basis that Newman claims that the individual is 'the key vehicle for attaining security through empowerment' (2004, p.358).

Indeed, with top-down institutional-based protection proving to be largely ineffective in FPZs, this bottom-up approach takes on greater significance. And as such, there are plenty of conceptual gymnastics designed to ensure the global protection regime is able to exploit the presumed inherent capacity of individuals to 'struggle well' to stay alive. For some, the fact that communities and individuals survive despite global protection failures actually justifies adopting a 'hands-off' approach to protection (Manyena 2006, p.434). As such, Chandler describes the resilience agenda as an 'avoidance of political responsibility' (2006, p.19). Duffield further stresses the growing trend in which institutional shortfalls are simply expected to be covered by individual capacity to 'self-manage' (2012, p.841; see also: Chandler 2012, p.213).

For some this unfolds as *post hoc* inevitability with Walker noting for example that 'the people directly affected by a disaster and their neighbours are always those who respond first in any crisis' (cited in Meredith 2009, p.277; see also: Cosgrave 2007, p.11; IFRC 2004, p.11; South *et al.* 2012, p.1). Thus, while the previous chapter saw the global protection promise reduced to 'solidarity' and a 'good-will gesture', as auto-protection, it is reduced to strategies of 'coping' and 'adapting' to risk and insecurity (Pupavac 2005a, pp. 161–2).⁹⁴ It is in this sense that auto-protection emerges in the global imagination as a viable form of protection, with advocates underlining the need to proactively empower 'people to fend for themselves' (2003, p.4).

However, given that in FPZs, auto-protection unfolds at the nexus between the failed global promise of protection and perpetual imminent deadly threats, it takes on a very particular tone, drawing extensively on the urgent struggle to survive. For example, Bajpai's suggestion that the approach is about the 'threats to the life and liberty of individuals and communities, balanced by capacities to deal with those threats' (2004,

⁹⁴ Yamin *et al.* define coping as 'temporary measures designed to maintain or return to the status quo'; and adapting as 'learning from the past to make improvements' (2005, p.4).

p.360; see also: Muggah *et al.* 2012, p.5) illustrates that implicitly auto-protection pits individuals at risk directly against armed perpetrators.

In this, there is no denying that human agency is dramatically constrained in FPZs. From this framing, although the South Sudanese above preferred this as their protective option, those in CAR were all too aware of the power inequities inherent to staring down the barrel of a gun. Systematically emphasising a distinct sense of despair, respondents indicated that ‘we have lost our hope’ (1M,Pastor-Epostolique,Ndele,Mar11); ‘everyone is demoralized, we have lost control of the situation; we have lost hope; we have no idea what is going to happen now; it is up to God’ (1M,CdQRunga, Kabo,Feb07). Repeatedly underlining that ‘we can do nothing with these armed men’ (2F,Muslim,Cam-Nord,July31), respondents claimed to have little or no capacity to protect themselves, explaining that ‘we are powerless’ (3F,IDPs,SiteB,Kabo,Feb06); ‘there is nothing to do, we have no force’ (1F, making peanut butter things,Batangafo,Feb23).

Despite these repeated claims of powerlessness, assumptions of independent resilience endure. For example, Barter asserts that people have at least ‘a handful of small yet significant options through which they may be able to survive’ (2012, p.545; see also: Jennings 2007, p.7; Kalyvas 2006, p.26; Nordstrom 2002, p.275). As a community leader stated, ‘we cannot do miracles; so now we are just concentrating on survival’ (1M,CdG, Osman,Zemio,Dec20). A group of respondents in South Sudan equally concluded that ‘now we can only struggle for our own lives’ (2M&3F,IDP-Woman looted,Rumbek,Nov04).

As such, within the frame of auto-protection as a struggle to survive, the following section develops a typology of auto-protection mechanisms and strategies including: tolerance, avoidance, negotiation, and resistance and explores the lived realities of these options through a micro perspective. The final section of this chapter returns to the macro perspective to examine how the global protection regime makes use of the reframing of protection as resilience as sketched in the introductory chapter.

6.2 Auto-Protection - A typology of Strategies

Adapting Hirschman’s frame of ‘exit, voice and loyalty’ which he applied to organizational behaviour (1970), Barter proposes ‘flight, voice, and support’ as categorizations of auto-protection options in conflict zones (2012; see also: Oosterom 2014, p.10). In this framing, ‘exit’ refers to flight to safer areas; ‘voice’ concerns speaking out to or against armed groups; and ‘support’ refers to that extended to the armed groups (Barter 2012, p.544). However, in assuming that people flee the situation of violence, such a framing fails to capture the *in situ* strategies of acceptance, submission, tolerance, and

adaptation which characterize much of the lived experience of acute violence for those who are unable to flee. Referring to such *in situ* efforts as ‘adapting’ and ‘coping’, Watts and Bohle suggest that such efforts aim ‘to reduce exposure, enhance coping capacity, strengthen recovery potential and bolster damage control’ (1993, p.118).

This broader diversity of both flight and *in situ* options are better captured in a conceptual frame developed by Fry in his anthropological studies of peace, in which he identifies four broad categories of micro level conflict management mechanisms. Adapted for the purposes of this discussion, his frame includes: ‘*toleration*’: where the threat is ignored, accepted, and contained to the degree possible; ‘*avoidance*’: where people seek to limit interface or avoid exposure to the threat; ‘*negotiation*’: where mutually acceptable solutions are sought; and various forms of ‘*self-redress*’ or what I call ‘*resistance*’: where unilateral action is taken in the form of resistance or confrontation (2006, pp.22–23; see also: Jeong 2008, pp.30–34). The remainder of this chapter explores how these strategies are applied in FPZs.

6.2.1 Toleration

Freedman suggests that a sense of ‘security is a combination of a physical condition, in the sense of being able to prevent others inflicting harm, and a mental condition, in the sense of confidence that this is indeed the case’ (1994, p.4; see also: Bajpai 2004, p.361). Few respondents living in the micro spaces of FPZs had this sense. The very inadequate alternative is to cope with the insecurity. This is the basis of a variety of auto-protection strategies that relate to tolerating the circumstances.

Identifying tolerance as one of ‘the most prevalent responses’ adopted by aggrieved people, Fry describes it as a process in which the causes of the conflict are ‘simply ignored, and the relationship with the offending party is continued’ (2006, p.26). In the oppressive context of armed conflict, this takes a particular form, with Grossman noting that being scared, people often respond with ‘mute passivity’ (1995 quoted in Kalyvas 2006, p.26). People try to ‘mute’ their existence making themselves invisible. Related, Van der Veer observes that controlling one’s behaviour is an important means of ‘restricting the consequences’ of a crisis situation (1998, p.6). In concrete terms, this often manifests through efforts to contain or stifle normal life activities, with a group of women in CAR explaining for example that because they are so worried ‘there is none of the normal animation in the quartier; if the kids start to cry, you immediately try to quiet them’ (3F, poor@base,Ndele,Mar09).

Reflecting what Nordstrom describes as ‘cowed acquiescence’ (2002, p.275), many respondents described efforts to ‘remain calm’ in order to avoid exacerbating an

already intolerable situation. This has at least two dimensions, with the first concerning the maintenance of internal social cohesion under duress. The second is more outward looking, relating to managing reactions to the presence of the armed actors within their environment. The following sketches toleration strategies in the form of 'containment', 'acquiescence', and 'compliance'.

6.2.1.1 Containment – Stifling normal life

With South *et al.* noting that 'one of the most effective protection strategies is to stay quiet and avoid attracting attention' (2012, p.7), many respondents in CAR concluded that there was little they could do within their circumstances beyond that. A group of women explained that 'problems between neighbours have decreased; people are afraid of the bigger problems; we don't want to provoke such problems' (9F, Christians by Séléka, Ndele, Mar13).

In this, respondents widely acknowledged the important role of community leaders in reassuring and calming people when attacks occur. Emphasising that 'even with the fear, everyone must stay calm' a grandmother explained that 'the CdQ advise their people to stay in their houses; they tell everyone to avoid problems' (1FGrandma&1M, Christians, Kabo6, Feb13). The Chef de Quartier (CdQ) themselves widely agreed that 'now it is the work of the CdQ to calm the population' (CdQ&wife, Fouh4, Aug08).

Especially in the early phases of the crisis, they focused on maintaining social cohesion, with a CdQ indicating that 'we advise people to avoid the problems; to keep quiet; to stay in their house at night' (1M, CdG, Galabajia, July23). With a group of women explaining that 'in these times people must try to avoid internal problems' (5F, Christians, Kabo1, Feb14), others explained that 'under this time of pressure, people are advised to live quietly together' (1M, RungaMuslim, Kabo, Feb13)., Muslim respondents also agreed at that point in the crisis, that 'when there is a problem, we just have to stay calm' (2F, French Muslims, Kentzou, Sept17).⁹⁵

Emphasising just how unpredictable the Séléka was, these internal efforts to stay calm were typically framed in relation to the larger fear of provoking violent oppression. While agreeing that 'the population can be sensitized to live together calmly' a Muslim man in a northern community originally occupied by the Séléka underlined that 'the relations with the Séléka will not change; they will continue to menace us' (1M, RungaMuslim, Kabo, Feb13). Thus a group of women explained that 'private problems in the quartier have

⁹⁵ As a group of women explained, 'to avoid fights, you have to accept abuse; if you engage, you create the situation for revenge; this causes more violence' (4F, DRC, NatStaffCPF, Kabo, Feb08). This obviously failed in the second phase of the crisis which was characterised by profound social fracturing and widespread deadly civilian-on-civilian violence, discussed in the next chapter.

decreased; no one wants problems; everyone is afraid of what the Séléka will do' (3F, Inside,focal-point,Ndele,Mar16). A women's leader added, 'people are afraid to cause problems with the Séléka present' (1F,PresWomAss@base,Ndele,Mar09). Thus, acquiescence reflects a further dimension of tolerating the larger threat of violent oppression.

6.2.1.2 Acquiescence - Reluctant acceptance

As the Séléka progressively occupied more territory, the population was forced into ever more constant and direct interface with them. Respondents repeatedly reiterated concerns that 'the Séléka are always circulating with their arms; problems are always possible with these guns' (2F,InterestingLady&daug,Art;Ndele,Mar12). As a woman and her daughter explained, 'these men are always around; they are too close; they provoke our youth; there are always problems' (2F,Interesting lady&daug,Art;Ndele,Mar12). It was exactly this reactive interface that needed to be managed. With one group of leaders stressing the need for their constituents to be 'extra vigilant' (2M,PresSiteA,Kabo,Feb09), significant energy was vested in containing the desire to strike back. Capturing the spirit of this toleration strategy, a female CdQ stressed that 'we must not get hot in the head; people must avoid these problems' (1F,CdQ,Castor,July30).

Demonstrating the concrete translation of Turton's claim that 'people are agents, no matter how limited' (2013, p.12; see also: Nnaemeka 1997, p.3), one group of leaders observed that 'in such difficulties, everyone becomes a little bit more wise; everyone listens better, even those who normally disobey orders; they can remain calm' (2M,Pres SiteA,Kabo,Feb09). Indeed, this increased exercise of discipline often reflects the extent of the margin of manoeuvre.

Recalling the fact that the Séléka was both the primary perpetrator of violence as well as the *de facto* 'authorities', people repeatedly underlined that 'there are no government structures now', noting that 'if there is a problem, people just have to be quiet about it; you can't report it to anyone' (2F,Interesting lady&daughter;Ndele,Mar12). Under constant intimidation, countless respondents reiterated that 'you don't open your mouth to say anything because the men with arms are always there; no one has the courage to speak' (1M,youth lisp,Galabajia,July23). As South *et al.* observe, in such contexts, 'silence and acquiescence to the demands of the powerful is the only viable self-protection strategy' (2012, p.7).

Making this all too tangible, a CdQ who had complained to the Séléka leadership about misconduct of their armed elements showed me the scars and bruises he bore as a result. With contained fury, he stated that 'if you report anything against the armed groups;

if the groups are denounced; you'll be menaced in the night; they'll come for retribution', thus concluding that 'the population can do nothing but keep quiet' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11). A group of women added that 'if you go and complain to the Séléka, they might kill you, so we just stay like this; we can just wait for peace' (4F,DRC/CPF,Kabo, Feb05). With this dramatic loss of voice, many respondents agreed with Jenkins *et al.* that sometimes, submission to or acceptance of a situation may be the most relevant and feasible response by those at risk (2005, p.9). This is ever more important in the face of immediate physical threat.

6.2.1.3 Compliance – Bending to others wishes under force

Armed Séléka elements patrolled freely, taking advantage of near total impunity, repeatedly committing both small and large-scale opportunistic as well as organised abuses against the civilian population. Pointing to the unpredictability, respondents repeatedly noted that 'people are afraid because the Séléka circulate here' (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug08); 'the situation is dangerous because the Séléka are nearby; they are too close to the population' (1M,Gend, Guito5,Aug02). Respondents systematically recounted individualized petty harassment, abuse, assault, and theft. With some complaining that 'Séléka can just demand payment from anyone as they walk by' (1M,CdQ,Ngaragba,Aug 05); others added that 'they are there, they circulate; they will arrest you just like that and kill you for no reason; we are treated like dogs' (2F&1M,FACA-retreat,Ngaragba,Aug 05).

This harassment was 'formalised' as Séléka took up its role as *de facto* 'authorities', with respondents explaining that 'they tax people heavily and randomly; if you resist they menace with their guns; you just have to pay' (2M,Aadvisors-to-CdQ,Ngaragba,Aug05); 'they will steal anything; now they can just arrest you like that; they can assault you or kill someone for no reason' (1M,NatStaff,Bangui,Aug07). Female petty traders were particularly vulnerable, explaining for example that 'Séléka will demand food, saying they will pay later; they never do; but there is nothing you can do; you can just give them what you have' (2F&2M,smart-kid,Bimbo,Aug10). Underlining the power discrepancies, respondents focused on the presence of guns, ominously stating that 'if you resist theft, you can die' (3F,poor@base,Ndele,Mar 09).

Acknowledging this extremely limited room to manoeuvre, South *et al.* repeat that in such contexts, 'civilians have little option but to comply with the demands' of the local power brokers (2012, p.7). For example, a 23 year old man whose compound was attacked and looted, with the armed actors stealing his goats (and thus his livelihood) captured this strategy all too well, explaining in a resigned but agitated manner, 'when I tried to stop them, they became aggressive; they threatened to harm me; my only choice

was to keep quiet; I could just let them do what they wanted' (1M,axe-Batangafo,Feb23). Another man who had tried to prevent such theft from occurring at an international safari compound was equally resigned to the fact that 'they loot; you just have to accept it; there is nothing you can do; nothing you can say' (1M, Safari-Chauffeur,Ndele,Mar14).

Nevertheless, recalling claims of agency in victimhood, despite these extremely oppressive circumstances, individuals certainly did strategize in efforts to maximise their options. For example, speculating that 'if their objective is to gain material goods' some reasoned that 'maybe if we just give the Séléka what they want, they will leave us be' (3F,poor@base,Ndele,Mar09). However, this in itself raised further concerns, with some anticipating that 'they will come again when we have nothing left; we don't know what they will do then' (10F,Christ laughing@Séléka,Ndele,Mar16); 'what will they do when they come the second time and we have nothing more to give them' (1M,Safari-Chauffeur,Ndele,Mar14). Underpinning these worries was the assumption that 'if you have nothing, then you are at risk of being beaten or killed' (1F,Veron,Ndele,Mar13). In this light, the young man who lost his goats concluded that 'we can only accept these kinds of problems or run away' (1M,on ax-Batangafo,Feb23). Indeed, within the profoundly limited options that people can generate in such circumstances, avoidance emerges as critical alternative.

6.2.2 Avoidance

People described a wide range of tactics making up the strategy of avoidance. Reflecting Keen's self-evident observation that an important means of 'limiting one's own exposure to violence is to avoid direct confrontation with an armed enemy' (2008, p.18), people emphasized that 'whenever we see armed men, we try to leave them space, we try to avoid them' (1M,CdQ, Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11); 'we see them there, but we don't talk to them; they cause us fear; we fear them because they have arms; they can beat people hard; this is their fashion for doing things; so we try to avoid them' (3F,Christians,Kabo3, Feb12). As one man explained, 'people do whatever they can to reduce their risks; they decrease their movements; people stay together in one house; they even reduce their food so they don't have to go out of their house' (1M,ICRCGuard,Mboki,Jan19). The following explores avoidance tactics including reduced movements; livelihood adaptations and changing roles; and displacement strategies.

6.2.2.1 Reduced Movements

As the Séléka presence was consolidated, people dramatically reduced their movements as a primary avoidance tactic. Many respondents explained that 'our freedom to move is decreased with Séléka; we are afraid of them' (2F,baby-handed-over,Kolongo-II,July26); 'we have no freedom of movement; we are blocked because we are surrounded

by these armed bandits' (5M,Youth-Artisans,Kolongo-II,July26). With a CdQ in Bangui explaining that 'people must stay inside their house to avoid the problems' (1M,CdG, Galabajia,July23), countless respondents reiterated that 'we do not leave our houses; we are afraid' (4F,Christians,round-house,Ndele,Mar18).

Further, with security threats escalating after dark, people described adopting self-imposed curfews, explaining that 'we cannot move after 19:00; everyone is in their house by then; it is like we have a curfew' (2F,Youth-Vendeuse,Galabajia,July23). As a young woman indicated, 'you can be beaten, shot, or killed if you come back late; they will demand where you were; you must give them your ID; they will demand money; they will steal your telephone just like that' (1F,Sandrine,Bangui,July24). As such, many underlined that 'everyone is in their house by 19:00 to avoid problems with Séléka who circulate at the night' (2F,Kidnapped-Boy,Guito5,Aug02).

However, as South *et al.* point out, such adaptive strategies are likely to have harsh consequences, often leaving people at even greater risk (2012, p.8). For example, eroding community solidarity, two women underlined that 'especially if there are problems in the night, we just stay inside; there is nothing we can do to help anyone' (2F,Muslim-Arab,Kabo,Feb14). Especially women pointed to the fact that 'if someone falls sick in the night, you can't take them to the hospital because of the insecurity' (3F,Ngaragba,big-empty-house,Aug05); 'you must wait for daylight; you can just treat the child with what you might have in the house; you hope you can get help with the daylight' (2F,@big House Ngaragba,Aug05). Others further added that 'if your baby is sick, you can't take him to the hospital because the Séléka are positioned at the hospital; they prevent us from going inside' (4F,petty-commerce,Gbafio,Aug01).

Further concerns for children included the closure of schools, with a group of women explaining that 'we do not send our kids to the school because they can be attacked; this is because we are living together with the Séléka' (3F,poor@base,Ndele, Mar09). With a CdQ reporting that 'the Séléka has taken kids hostage at schools' (1M, CdQ,Gobongo-III,Aug03), many people refused to send their children to school stating that 'we are afraid the Séléka will trap them' (4F,petty commerce,Gbafio,Aug01).

Other daily activities were also deeply constrained due to the many Séléka checkpoints. Crossing these was described as an extremely precarious undertaking, with a woman complaining about being searched at each crossing, stating that 'they say they are searching for arms; but they are just bandits; they loot our things; they are dangerous' (1F, son@risk,Bimbo,Aug10). However, efforts to such incidents often had equally harrowing implications, with a group of woman 'choosing' to spend the night in the open bush rather

than trying to cross a checkpoint to which they arrived later than planned. They explained that 'it was cold; maybe the wild animals would get us; but we thought this was safer than trying to cross the barrier' (3F,visitor,Bimbo,Aug10).

Such trade-offs eradicate the meaning of 'choice'. As South *et al.* underline, facing 'terrible dilemmas' such options often consist of 'trade-offs between different risks' which regularly expose people to even greater risks (2012, p.21; see also: Fischhoff *et al.* 1984, p.127). Although some commentators assert that 'people are agents, no matter how limited, in a physical sense, their room for manoeuvre may be' (Turton 2013, p.12; see also: Jenkins 2005, p.9; Nnaemeka 1997, p.3), as the 'room for manoeuvre' shrinks in acutely violent contexts, so too does meaningful choice.⁹⁶ This was further evident in relation to household livelihoods.

6.2.2.2 Livelihood Adaptations

With Leaning reminding us that protection in the sense of human security, is far more than simply physical security, also concerning securing minim levels of food, water, and shelter (2004, p.354; see also: UNDP 1994, p.23), Jaspars and O'Callaghan emphasise an intimate link between livelihoods, food security and protection (2010, p.1; 2008, p.1; see also: South *et al.* 2012, p.3). This is especially evident in relation to auto-protection, which as a means of 'coping' is often reduced to choices made between the equally deadly threats of food insecurity or physical insecurity. As largely agricultural areas, this dilemma was repeatedly referenced in both South Sudan and CAR. With a community leader in CAR explaining that 'lots of people want to return to their land, but the insecurity is strong', he reported that 'some people go; they have no choice; but they are being killed' (1M,CdV,SiteA,Zemio,Dec28). A woman who witnessed an armed attack on her neighbours in their field explained that 'some of us take the risk' - chuckling ironically and shrugging her shoulders she added 'we continue because if not what will we eat?' (1F, Deplace,Mboki,Jan19).

In more urban areas, people repeated that 'we are afraid to go to the market, to collect firewood, or to go to our fields; the armed men will steal our materials; they just take these things for themselves; they can beat us' (4F,Christians,young-girl;Ndele,Mar18); 'we continue to hear gunfire; this keeps people afraid; this prevents women from going to the market' (1M&1F,SonCdG,Ndele,Mar12). As an alternative coping strategy, many noted that 'people have reduced their meals; people only eat one meal a day; children are always hungry; hunger is now our biggest problem' (4F,petty-commerce,Gbafio,Aug01).

⁹⁶ As Sen says, meaningful choice-making has two dimensions: one concerns the actual choices available; the other concerns the degree of freedom with which one can select the choices available (2010, p.230).

This echoes all too precisely the words of the group of women in South Sudan who, criticising those taking risks to search for food, stated that ‘we know they are suffering with hunger; but life is bigger, life is more important than food’ (6F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 22). Again, the notion of choice is increasingly meaningless.

Shifting gender roles

Many avoidance strategies are constructed on interpretations of gender-based vulnerability. For example, respondents in CAR agreed that ‘our young men are targeted by the Séléka’ (3F,little girl dancing,Kolongo,July26), with one young man explaining that ‘the Séléka is focusing on men; they want to avoid a counter-rebellion; they don’t want the youth to function against them’ (1M,NatStaff,Bangui,Aug09). Both men and women agreed that ‘men are menaced more than women in nearly every sense’ (1M&1F,PastorBaptiste-on-hill,Ndele,Mar15); ‘it is not the women that the Séléka target; they will kill men faster than they will kill women; they leave women as the weak sex’ (1F,Banguioffice,Aug01); ‘the Séléka chase our men away; but they leave women as the feeble sex’ (2F&1M,Young-Adults,reflective,Castor,July30). Thus, the shifting of gender roles was a widely adopted avoidance strategy.

Similarly, in South Sudan, it was speculated that ‘the government forces are looking for young men because they think they are all rebels’ (2M,@kiosk,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 26), with men stating that ‘they cannot see a difference between the rebel and the civilian; they see any man, even without a uniform; they think he is a rebel, so they want just to kill him’ (1M,leader,Bentiu-PoC,Nov26). Both men and women again agreed that ‘they are especially looking for men’ (2F,eating-lunch,Koch,Dec05); ‘the soldiers are searching for men’ (1M,dying-hair,Bentiu-PoC,Nov 23). As such, it was widely concluded that ‘they will just kill any men they find’ (1M&1F,plump-baby,Koch,Dec05). However, building the important ‘nuance’ that ‘these ones [the armed men] kill men and rape women’ (3F,harassed@tea-shop,Koch,Dec09), auto-protection and so-called ‘choice’ in this case is reduced to impossible trade-offs. In efforts to avoid such ‘choices’, many opted for displacement as an avoidance strategy.

6.2.2.3 Displacement – Impossible ‘choices’

In acutely violent contexts, auto-protection ‘choices’ are regularly made in the face of unimaginable uncertainty laced with fears of the worst. Displacement, often being one of the default options, takes many forms including ad hoc temporary movements; back and forth shuttle movements; and relatively permanent relocation that might include crossing borders. As Barter suggests, the decision to flee is ‘more accurately a series of decisions’ including where to go, when to leave, what to carry, and so on (2012, p.550). As touched

on in chapter two, these decisions are often made in the face of imminent violent threat, and thus often entail quite brutal choices. Being dominated by a sense of pandemonium and risk, *meaningful* choice is again undeniably scarce.

As one group of women in South Sudan described, 'people were going in all directions, it was chaotic; no one knew what was going on; you just run; people went where they could; there was no planning; we did not know where we were going; we just followed the direction that people were going' (4F,marked-mama,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Demonstrating the extent to which people are stripped of choice and thus 'resilience' in such circumstances, a group of women stated that 'you just know to run in the opposite direction from the attackers' (6F,IDPs@front,shook,Nov10). Another group added that 'everyone was responsible for their own lives' (4F, Holding-back, Bentiu-PoC,Nov27).

Nevertheless, people tried to be tactical within their impossible circumstances. For example, explaining that 'the armed men were following us; they were moving by vehicle; they were shooting on us with big guns when they saw us' a group of women explained that 'we run to the swamps so they could not follow us' (5F,women-group,PoC2,Bentiu, Nov22). However, this was extremely difficult given that the women were responsible for the small children, with one describing that 'people pulled children on tarps; some put them in basins; we just had to swim in the water like that; we hid in the day; we moved in the water at night' adding quietly that 'some women lost their children in the water' (1F,Ang, PoC2,Bentiu,Nov22).

Many respondents underlined the particular anxieties of fleeing with children, explaining that 'we carried the small children while we ran' (2F,interested@Tea-shop, Koch,Dec08); 'we crossed the river with the small ones who even cannot swim' (1M, captured,Bentiu-PoC,Nov25). Of course some drowned. Others were lost in the panic, with one man explaining that 'people were separated from their children; when people ran, you could just take a different branch and you would lose your relatives' (1M,NatStaff,Koch, Dec10). Two young men recounted that 'you could just find lost children while you were running; they were crying, calling for their parents; you pick them and continue running' again quietly concluding that 'you might find their parents when you stopped at the next location; or you might not' (2M,@kiosk,Bentiu-PoC,Nov26).

Others described further challenges. For example, one young women explained that 'I just followed people as they fled but I was slow because I have two small children and I had a broken prosthetic leg' (1F,trans2,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). Similarly, another woman explained that 'I ran together with my father who is blind; we were very slow' (1F, Ang,PoC2,Bentiu,Nov22). An elderly, frail woman who had been left behind along the way

because she was too slow recalled that ‘I did not know which way to go; they told me which path to follow; I kept falling down but I just knew I had to move to the place where my children were’ – after a quiet moment with her thoughts, she concluded that ‘I eventually arrived’ (3F,old com,Koch,Dec06).

But even after ‘arriving’, few places proved to be safe. Capturing the desperation in this, a group of women recalled that ‘you could think you were there; that maybe now you were safe; but then we would see the armed men again; or we would be told they were near; we knew we just had to keep moving’ (5F,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). As one woman said ‘people are beginning to think there is nowhere safe’ (1F,Ganyliel,Nov13). Even with short respites, people knew they had to plan for the next attacks.

They also knew that ultimately, their options were inadequate vis-a-vis the threats. Especially men underlined that they did not try to devise complex strategic displacement plans because viable options simply do not exist. Indicating that when they would be again attacked, he would do the same thing, going in the same direction as last time ‘because there is no other channel available; it is all we can do’ (1M,nat-staff,Koch,Dec07). As such, many banked on hope against all odds that the worst would not happen again. For example, one man explained that ‘people are not preparing to displace again; they are just waiting to see what happens with the peace process’ (1M,trans1,Koch,Dec08).⁹⁷

Although displacement options were generally more diverse in CAR, they equally reflected ‘choice-making’ between bad and worse options. Explaining that ‘the first time the armed men arrived everyone ran in every direction’ (2F,Muslims@compound,Ndele,Mar16), many respondents reported fleeing to their fields. However, many were also quickly forced to return to urban centres for various reasons. For example, underlining that ‘life in the bush is hard’ a Muslim woman explained that ‘we came back to town because of the mosquitoes; but with the insecurity in town we had to flee again; we have since returned to town, but we are always uneasy’ (1F,Mus@centre-after-kids,Ndele,Mar19). Emphasising the persistent insecurity, many described being perpetually prepared to (re)flee, explaining that ‘fear pushes people to flee; we are always ready to run’ (4F,Christ,Ndele,Mar15); ‘we are always afraid; whenever we hear the gunfire we are ready to run again’ (2F,Muslims@compound,Ndele,Mar16); ‘we are always ready to flee; we have no stability, we don’t know what is going to come’ (4M,Youth-Students,Fouh4,Aug08).

This unpredictability is painfully captured in the case of an individual in Bangui describing the heart-wrenching decision that he and his family made to leave his elderly mother behind while his neighbourhood was under Séléka bombardment. With her

⁹⁷ These towns have been attacked multiple times since my discussions with them.

physical mobility constraints slowing their emergency flight, moving the grandmother with them risked putting everyone in mortal danger. Thus, during an acute attack on their quartier, the family fled on foot to another part of the town, while leaving the grandmother behind. They were unable to return to their house for two days due to continued bombardment by the Séléka. During this time, they lost communication with the grandmother. Although she was alive on their return, one doesn't want to imagine what she had experienced. But this was not the end of the ordeal. With the concern that the attacks against the civilians would resume, she was relocated to a less volatile area of town for a few days. However, the attacks did not resume until the third day – the day on which the woman had been returned to her home. She was once again left on her own to endure another 2 days and nights of essentially constant bombardment, while the rest of her family was forced to contend with their feelings of profound impotence as they squatted in another part of town waiting for the Séléka attack to come to an end (1M,Jean-Baptiste,Office,Bangui,Aug 31).⁹⁸

Choice of bad & worse options

The displacement dilemma is the fact that physical security is not always the most urgent concern. As alluded to above, hunger and disease quickly rival physical danger as the most imminent deadly threat. Reflecting on the bad and worse options available, a very gaunt and exhausted looking grandmother who was caring for two young grandchildren noted that 'in the bush there is no water, no mosquito-nets so people fall ill; but in town there is no security so it is dangerous; we are here [in town] now, but we are planning to go back to the bush' (2F,Christ grandma,Ndele,Mar16). While worrying that 'now the children are sick and scared' she acknowledged that there are simply no good options. Reflecting on this, she noted that 'I am old, I have lived my life, if I die this is not a big problem' but worrying about her grandchildren, she stressed that 'these little ones, what is their future when there is no water, no food and no security; they cannot survive like this' (2F,Ndele,Mar16).

Auto-protection 'choices' are regularly made between competing severity of risks. The choices made typically come with harsh consequences. For example, one young woman explained that although her family had fled to the bush when the Séléka had first arrived, they were quickly forced to return to the town when their father became very ill. Although they managed to get him to the hospital, it was too late and he died shortly thereafter. After burying him, they decided to stay in the urban centre, concluding that 'it is

⁹⁸ The man reciting this incident himself later died due to health complications for which he was unable to get treatment.

hard here; we are always afraid; but it was much worse there [in the bush]' (4F,Christians, with young girl,Ndele,Mar18). Similarly, the mechanic man introduced in earlier also lived through a dreadfully distressing displacement experience. His infant son fell severely ill in the bush, but because he was being personally targeted, he was unable to access the necessary emergency health care – his child eventually died (1M,Safari-Chauffeur,Ndele, Mar14).

Weighing the impossible, some of the most brutal choices made are those related to the gender dimensions sketched above. For example, in South Sudan people who had fled their towns under attack were often quickly forced to return to these towns, [now occupied by armed actors] in search of food. In this, Amnesty International noted that 'younger men refused to go for fear of being killed, and younger women were afraid of being raped or forced into marriage' (2014b, p.33). However, given that the cultural norm in South Sudan places the responsibility for the well-being of children on women, again women agreed that 'they will rape you; even kill you; you don't know even if you will survive; but you think about your children' (1F,good-com-en,Leer,Oct25). As such, respondents widely reiterated that 'women had to return to the towns because they had to get food for their children' (3F,distribution,Leer,Oct23); 'it was only the women who went back to town to look for food' (2F,IDPNhialdu,Leer,Oct24).

With one young man reiterating that 'only women could go to buy food from the soldiers; if they saw men they'd kill them' (1M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec07), countless women repeated fears that 'if the armed troops found women, they would beat and rape them; if she refused they would kill her' (1M&1F,plump-baby,Koch,Dec06). Indeed, protection analysts emphasized the 'direct correlation between food insecurity and increased incidents of sexual violence', noting that the growing food crisis forced women into 'risking the most brutal, personal violence while struggling to keep their families alive' (GBV Protection Sub-Cluster 2014, p.2; see also: NP 2014, p.8).⁹⁹ Thus although women assumed this role, the risks often proved deadly.

As one woman explained, she and her sister had been forced to return to their town many times during a three-month displacement. Interfacing directly with the very same troops who had ruthlessly chased them out of their homes, she recited in a distant but matter-of-fact tone that 'we went to those men to buy things; they would beat us; they used women as their wives; they stole my money; but I just had to go back because I needed to buy medicine for my child'. Stating baldly that 'women were killed', she went on to report that her own sister had in fact been killed in this manner, explaining that 'one of

⁹⁹ UNMISS reported that '[a]ll parties to the conflict have committed acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women of different ethnic groups' (2014, p.3).

those men wanted to rape her; she refused so he killed her with his gun' (1F,in shade, Koch,Dec05).

Acknowledging this incredibly difficult dilemma, one young man stressed that 'people don't even want to talk about this; the good thing is that many of our women were not killed; they just had sex with them and then released them back' (1M,NatStaff,Koch, Dec10). In this way, rape was generally deemed as comparably 'preferential' among impossible 'choices', illustrating all too precisely the miniscule space for exercising agency in such circumstances. In this displacement is exposed as poor alternative to the promise embodied within global protection norms. Alternatively, some look to negotiating with those who control the violence.

6.2.3 Negotiations

While avoidance and toleration strategies are about reducing interface with those posing a threat, negotiation has the opposite intent. Often entailing direct engagement with those who control the violence, it is a generally higher-risk auto-protection strategy. Fry describes negotiating as a process of finding mutually acceptable solutions among the conflicting actors (2006, pp.22–23). However, given the extreme power inequities that characterise FPZs, most respondents were dubious of such options. For example, respondents in South Sudan repeated that 'we can do nothing; we have no power; we don't talk to them' (2M&1F,Building House,Koch,Dec05). Even local officials were clear that 'we the people cannot talk; they cannot allow us to talk to them; they will only kill us' (5M,Elders@market, Koch,Dec04).

As such, Hirschman suggests a moderated idea of 'voice', which is understood more broadly as 'any attempt at all to change, rather than escape from, an objectionable state of affairs...through appeal to a higher authority' (1970, p.30). It is on this basis that respondents rather called on INGOs to dialogue with the various power brokers on their behalf as discussed in the previous chapter. In CAR, there were similar calls for INGOs to 'speak with the armed groups', with local authorities adamant that 'we cannot do so on our own' (2M,with Mayor's office,Ndele,Mar17). Others added that 'it is not possible for us to have dialogue with the armed actors' (1M,Big-Bro of-IDPs,Batangafo,Feb21); 'we don't have the power to do this ourselves' (5M,OldRefugees,Zemio,Jan02).

Nevertheless, in some cases people are forced into negotiations within their local spaces. This emphasises the courage it must have taken for the women in South Sudan who had to navigate through the battle fields as discussed throughout. With men seeking to remain hidden, it was primarily women who engaged directly with the armed actors in the sense of 'voice' – at potentially deadly risk as described above. For example, those

who relocated to the UNMISS Bentiu PoC-site after having been in the bush for months (as discussed in chapter four) were forced into direct encounters with these armed men.

Demonstrating the precariousness of that process, one group explained vaguely that 'we had heard that these men might help if you were moving with small children; they could take you if you could pay something small; they had vehicles to help us move' (3F&2M,dying-hair,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). When asked about the paradox in receiving assistance from the very men who had previously pursued them in the bush, their utter absence of negotiating leverage was revealed when the women in the group explained that 'we were so tired; you go to see what these people are going to do to you; maybe they are going to help, maybe they are going to kill you; but you just go' (3F&2M,dying-hair,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23).

In CAR, respondents repeatedly underlined the fact that 'we fear the Séléka; we have been chased by them before; we fear the same thing will happen again' (1M,Pres-Site-B,Kabo,Feb 06). Describing them as 'unreliable' and 'unpredictable' (1M,Big-Bro of IDPs,Batangafo,Feb21), respondents were adamant that 'we can't go directly to the Séléka; these people are very difficult to collaborate with; they always treat problems with guns' (1M,Pres site-A,Kabo,Feb09).

However, corresponding with observations by South *et al.* that 'community leaders are sometimes able to engage with the power-holders and persuade them to change their behaviour' (2012, p.7), people in rural areas regularly looked to their leaders to do so. In one of the distant rural localities first occupied by the Séléka, the local Mayor emerged as the liaison between the population and the Séléka. Arguing they themselves could not do so, lower level local leaders stressed that 'it is only the Mayor who can function with those ones with the guns' (2M,CdQ&Sage,Kabo,Feb07). The Mayor himself explained that 'because people are afraid to go directly to the Séléka, they report issues to me; I then take these to discuss with the Séléka' (1M,Mayor,Kabo,Feb06). While he proclaimed to manage the intense tensions between the two groups, the magnitude (and fragility) of his task was highlighted through the repeatedly ransacking of his public office Séléka elements. Thus, despite being widely respected and recognised as exceptionally brave, most respondents doubted that he could achieve much with the armed actors.

This was underpinned with the widely recited story of the CdQ who was beaten by these armed elements for raising concerns about their conduct. Adding to claims by this CdQ that 'the one who speaks up will be visited in the night by these ones with guns' (1M,CdQ,Saraonion,Ndele,Mar11), another leader claimed that 'if we try to speak out about something, they will simply beat us' (1M,CdQ,Building-house,Ndele,Mar15).

Similarly, the CdQ who was harassed by senior Séléka and Government officials asked rhetorically, 'what can I do when I myself am not respected by these people; they can just shoot me; they have no respect' (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug03). Thus, although critical and often profoundly brave efforts continued, as Barter says 'voice often fails' (2012, p.557).

Concluding that 'if you go to the Séléka, you'll create a problem' such experiences left community leaders asking 'who can we talk to when they are armed; these ones are men of guns; with no arms against them, we have no defence; we are just little, we have no force; we cannot complain; we can only keep quiet' (2M,CdQ&Sage,Kabo,Feb07). These negative experiences tend to force people to revert to strategies of even greater toleration and avoidance. However, as Nordstrom notes, individuals meet 'violence in a profoundly personal way' (2002, p.277), and thus the direct targeting of communities inevitably provokes a deeply personal experience. This often exposes a finite capacity for toleration. As such, perpetual exposure to extreme threats pushes at least some people towards more confrontational auto-protection options. In fact, despite dramatic risks of violent retaliation, it was only some few months after Séléka had installed themselves in Bangui that the UNSG began reporting 'increasing signs of mounting resistance from the population' against Séléka (2013a, para.25).

6.2.4 'Self-redress' – Resistance

Fry describes '*self-redress*' as the process in which one disputant takes unilateral action against the other (2006, pp.22–23). Given the power inequities inherent to FPZs, I refer to such strategies as 'resistance'. Arguing that people often find creative ways to resist, Nordstrom says that this is one of 'the most sophisticated mechanisms for asserting personal agency and political will in the face of intolerable repression' (2002, p.276). This section sketches some examples of resistance and/or confrontation that people resorted to including demonstrations; 'casserole'; throwing rocks; and finally, overt use of force.

6.2.4.1 Demonstrations

Respondents from some of the worst affected zones in CAR regularly mentioned aspirations of demonstrating against the Séléka's brutality. For example while being under intensive Séléka surveillance because he had formerly been part of the Gendarme, one man explained that because his community was located next to a large Séléka base, they had suffered repeated Séléka 'operations' disguised as disarmament operations. Thus, claiming that 'people would like to organize a demonstration against the Séléka', he nevertheless quickly added that they feared heavy-handed retaliation, explaining that 'people are afraid; if we walk for peace, the Séléka will arrive shooting in the air; people

can get hurt with stray bullets'. He thus concluded that 'it is not possible at this time' (1M, Gend, Guito5, Aug02).

Nevertheless, the community of a leader who was denigrated by a senior Séléka General and the Minister of National Security took the risk to demonstrate, with two men explaining that 'people wanted to show their frustration' (2M, @Kiosk, Mandaba, Aug03). This CdQ himself explained that 'the population went to the street *en masse* to protest against the mal-treatment; they revolted; they demonstrated when those ones threatened our community' (1M, CdQ, Mandaba, Aug03). Others added that 'we burned tires; people were shouting and clanging casseroles in protest against their mal-treatment' (2M, kiosk, Mandaba, Aug03). Following this, that particular community suffered repeated brutal blanket 'operations' by the Séléka. Nevertheless, when asked about these deadly consequences, respondents simply shrugged their shoulders concluding that 'we have nothing to lose; what else can we possibly do' (1M&1F, CdQ&wife, Fouh4, Aug08).

For many, the idea of demonstration is about gaining visibility and drawing attention to their plight. In this sense, a group of both Muslim and Christian women courageously gathered on March 08, 2012 in a northern town occupied by Séléka to mark international women's day. The president of a women's group explained that 'as women we do not support this violence; we want people to know' (1F, PresWomAss@base, Ndele, Mar09). However given their rural location, their efforts went largely unnoticed.

Far more visibly, September 2013 saw a similar effort to gain international attention through demonstration, with some 6000 residents occupying the international airport in Bangui. Reporting the sudden arrival of this mass of humanity on the airstrip, Aljazeera quoted one citizen as saying that they had one goal: 'to get the world's attention' (2013d; see also: Smith 2013). Respondents added that 'they are counting on the international community to help; the Séléka must be controlled' (1M, Bangui-Office, Aug30). Explaining that this was 'a protest against the state of lawlessness', a national staff of an INGO reiterated that 'people have had enough; things cannot go on like this' (1M, NatStaff, Bangui, Sept01). International peacekeepers eventually broke-up this demonstration with water cannons and teargas, but not before some international flights were interrupted (Aljazeera 2013d; Smith 2013).

6.2.4.2 Clanging Casseroles

In further effort to gain international attention, a more modest attempt saw the population in another quartier in Bangui coordinate efforts to continuously 'claque their casseroles' [or saucepans] between the hours of 16:00 to 17:00 for 3 days running. The leader of this quartier explained that 'this is for the international community to see; they

must come to address these security problems' (2M,CdQ,Fouh6,old-guy,tracksuit,Aug02). Claiming that Radio France International had reported the event, his 24 year old son was hopeful that 'international people would have heard these radio reports' (1M,son-of-CdQ,Fouh6,Aug02). Nevertheless, this venture was discontinued following Séléka threats.

This 'casserole' action was nevertheless also adopted as a daily protective mechanism. Emphasising their inability to help each other, especially at night, because 'they will be aggressed themselves', one local leader explained that 'we have adopted the casseroles as an internal alert system; everyone talks of clanging lids together to make a loud noise; when the neighbours hear this they join in; soon the noise becomes very loud; sometimes they blow whistles to make even more noise' (1M,CdQ,Ngbeg,July26). Others added that 'we can whistle and clack lids to make noise to alert everyone when there is a problem' (2F,sleeping-baby handed-over,Kolongo-II,July26). As such, some respondents were hopeful that 'when the Séléka target specific houses for theft, we can scare them away with lots of noise; they know the community is watching' (1M,teacher&calm wife; Cité,Aug07); 'with the casseroles, the armed men flee' (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug 03).

A CdQ more sceptically underlined the precariousness of the strategy, explaining that 'we can only shout and make noise; we just hope this scares the armed men away' (1M,CdQ,Gbafio,Aug01). However, more typically, it was reported that these efforts actually agitate the armed actors with some reporting that 'the noise makes the Séléka shoot more', which in itself causes the residents to become even more intimidated (2M,CdQFouh6,Aug02). For the most part, this intimidation caused most people to revert again to tolerance and avoidance. But progressively more individuals were pushed beyond toleration towards even more offensive tactics. In some cases, rocks were the weapon they turned to.

6.2.4.3 Throwing Rocks

The above mention community that demonstrated against Séléka abuses remained under intensive and violent pressure. During a visit shortly after one of the many Séléka attacks, despite being visibly cowed, people were also extremely animated in their frustration exclaiming that 'the Séléka have guns; we have no guns to defend ourselves, but we cannot just accept all of this; we will throw rocks against them; we will fight with our hands; people have had enough' (3M&2F,scared-outside,Aug08). The leader of this community agreed that 'now we will begin to throw stones; we will fight back with violence; we have had enough now' (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug03). Only days later, the Séléka returned, directly menacing the population with an even larger show of force. Having barricaded the quartier to limit displacement, they continued to launch heavy artillery

directly into the neighbourhood over a 2 day period¹⁰⁰ – an initiative that provoked no visible protective response by international peacekeepers stationed nearby.

Thus, although anger may propel individuals under attack to try to resist, even in the face of grave danger, such efforts are dramatically constrained in an acutely violent context. While commentators assert that ‘people are agents, no matter how limited, in a physical sense, their room for manoeuvre may be’ (Turton 2013, p.12; see also: Jenkins 2005, p.9; Nnaemeka 1997, p.3), the evidence is that even the smallest attempt at resistance is typically brutally curtailed with excessive force. As such, the room for manoeuvre in terms of auto-protection is dramatically reduced. As a local leader asserted, ‘we are not passive; we have ideas, but we have no force, no means’ (1M,CdG,Osman, Zemio,Dec20).

Acknowledging the futility of their non-coercive efforts, people desperately repeated that ‘we don’t know how we can exit in these difficulties; we don’t know when it is going to end’ (5M,CommunityChurchReps,Zemio,Dec22). Underlining that ‘our biggest worry is these ones with guns’ (7M,Muslim,Ndele,Mar12), one couple emphasised that ‘we cannot count on them being reasonable; people are always afraid; we don’t know if they will come again tomorrow’ (1M&1F,teacher&calm-wife;Cite,Aug07). With their perpetual exposure to deadly violence generating an ever escalating sense of risk, those exposed were left wondering ‘what can we do to defend ourselves when facing those guns’ (2M, CdQ&advisor,Gbafio,Aug01); ‘how can we resist against a gun’ (2F,Christ grandma,Ndele, Mar 6).

As such, especially men concluded that ‘the problem is that we don’t have arms to protect ourselves’ (3M,wired-IDPs,FOMAC,Ndele,Mar14); ‘we have no arms to defend ourselves’ (1M,CdG,QSultan,Ndele,Mar11). As such, in the early phases of the crisis, a group of Muslim men equally agreed that ‘without guns you cannot defend yourself against these ones [referring to Séléka elements]’ (7M,Muslim,Ndele,Mar12). As the crisis progressed, more individuals agreed that ‘we cannot protect ourselves without arms’ (1M, CdQGbafio,Aug01). Even the CdQ who had been publically denigrated concluded that ‘people without arms can do nothing against these ones’ (1M,CdQ,Mandaba,Aug03).

Respondents in South Sudan equally reducing their auto-protection options to that of ‘fight or flight’, with one man stating that ‘in this crisis, the only way of protection is either by hiding or by the gun’ (1M,Eng @market,Koch,Dec04). To the degree possible, people try to avoid the threats they confront. However, as they are pushed beyond their capacity

¹⁰⁰ Although with difficulties, the vast majority of the population fled to other parts of Bangui. It was during this incident when the elderly woman mentioned above was left alone in her home for the second time.

to tolerate, the option for more violent fight is perceived as ever more viable. Indeed, Kalyvas observes that perpetual exposure to brutalization fosters the rising prominence of 'people with a propensity for violence' (2006, pp.55–56). Keen adds that 'as war is turned against civilians, they may themselves be forced to resort to violence' (1998, p.46).

6.2.4.4 Armed Confrontation

With supporters of the human security agenda arguing that empowered people 'can contribute directly to identifying and implementing solutions to the quagmire of insecurity' (Ogata & Sen 2003, p.6; see also: Castleden *et al.* 2011, p.369), Steenkamp observes that fear coupled with the collapse of formal systems 'leads to grassroots support' for the use of violence by individuals 'to ensure community safety and stability' (2005, p.265; see also: Kalyvas 2006, p. 61; Keen 2008, p.20).

As discussed in earlier chapters, having to protect themselves in 'the absence of any real State protection' the people of CAR in the past have regularly organized themselves 'into ad hoc self-defence groups' (Alston 2010, p.8; see also: Berman & Lombard 2008, p.28; USG 2011, p.16). Thus with respondents widely concluding that 'you have to depend on yourself for security; you do your own security for yourself' (1M,IDP-President,Ax-Zemio,Mboki,Jan19), many thought they should be armed. For example, before President Bozizé was overrun, some suggested 'he should send us arms so we can protect ourselves' (1M,IDP-interview,Bat,Feb22). One young man explained that 'the President should select certain brave men in each town and arm them to protect their own village; when the rebels are well armed, we need to be given proper arms to protect ourselves' (1M,Youth@IDP-interview,Bat,Feb22).

Given the complex history of armed self-protection in the previous war,¹⁰¹ respondents in South Sudan also quickly reached similar conclusions. While acknowledging that 'protection is again under our own hands' two elder men who had fought in the previous war stated that 'we know we must protect ourselves; we know how to do this; if the enemies come, we will fight; we will protect our children' (2M,older,sun-glasses;Ganyliel,Nov12). Indeed, respondents in rural areas reported that 'our youth have been recruited to protect us; now they are armed; they are few but they will try to defend against attackers' (2F,pretty-lady en,Ganyliel,Nov10). Others added that 'now the civilians are protecting the area; we are secure with these ones patrolling' (4M,Administration,Gan-

¹⁰¹ Jok and Hutchinson note that during the previous civil war in which much of the violence was targeted at the civilian base of opposing factions, southern factions armed their respective ethnic groups as a means of self-defence (1999, p.134).

sanu,Nov10).¹⁰² However, the two elder ex-combatant above acknowledged that ‘we are not prepared, but if we are attacked, they must try to defend this area’ (2M, older, sunglasses;Ganyliel,Nov12).¹⁰³ Thus, the notion of resilience or self-protection is eventually translated from the bottom-up as the picking up of arms.

These insights into the micro level operationalisation of auto-protection shed a very particular light on assertions by the IFRC that more attention needs to be given ‘to what affected communities can do for themselves’ (2004, p.13). This returns us to the reframing of protection as resilience.

6.3 Co-opting Resilience

The resilience agenda (as sketched in the introductory chapter) provides an extraordinarily convenient re-framing of the notion of protection. Framing the inherent struggle on the part of individuals who are exposed to perpetual deadly threats in FPZs to survive as ‘resilience’ gives a positive spin to what are actually dreadful failures on the part of the global protection regime. For resilience to work, ‘communities have to be exposed, opened up or, in some way, abandoned to the possibility of risk and uncertainty’ (Duffield 2012, p.481). With calls for ‘embracing the uncertainty as opportunity’ (Ibid), dire circumstances are presented in a positive light. Levine *et al.* critically note the ‘growing argument that crises can be turned into transformational opportunities’ (2012, p.4).

As such, the resilience agenda has been enthusiastically taken up by the power brokers animating the global protection regime. For example, a USAID/DFID policy document argues that ‘when people are empowered to draw on their own capacity, strengths, and values...resilience is strengthened’ (Frankenberger, Campbell, *et al.* 2012, p.1; see also: Borenstein 2014; Hillier & Castillo 2013, p.9). Stating that individuals at-risk should be ‘the actors of their own protection’ ECHO explicitly states that ‘self-protection must be at the heart of protection strategies’ of all humanitarian protection actors, claiming that such approaches can support and empower communities at risk ‘to develop their own strategies to reduce exposure to and mitigate the effects of these risks’ (2009, p.9; see also: DFID 2011b, p.8).

This language not only disguises global protection failures as opportunity, it equally justifies the abdication of responsibility. As resilience, protection is no longer about a top-

¹⁰² In addition to this local recruitment, HRW reports extensive recruitment by both sides of child soldiers for frontline battle as well (2015c). Described as a war crime by the ICC, the recruitment of children is equally reported as a significant concern in CAR (see for example: Save the Children 2014, p.1).

¹⁰³ More recently, HRW reported that these groups have clashed with attacking troops (2015a, p.4).

down process that fails to translate globally articulated norms into concrete impact, but is rather about supporting people at risk to step up to protect themselves. However, vis-à-vis the above discussion, it is unsurprisingly widely acknowledged that the operationalisation of this in even the most modest sense in FPZs has largely failed (Castleden *et al.* 2011, p.369; Duffield 2012; Hargreaves *et al.* 2012; Hargreaves 2012; Levine *et al.* 2012).¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, giving credence to claims by Hargreaves *et al.* that the resilience agenda effectively ‘takes pressure off the international community to act’ (2012, p.24),¹⁰⁵ such failures have not limited the sometimes dramatic claims made on the basis of the notion of resilience. For example, presumably drawing on the idea of ‘ordinary magic’, Mahony claims that ‘in essence, people are their own best protectors’ (2006, p.24). Further, apparently building on the idea that strength is found in adversity, ECHO bizarrely claims that ‘protection that is achieved by people, rather than delivered to them, is likely to be more durable’ (2009, p.9).

However, building on Igantieff’s assertion that people are ‘at risk of their lives if they lack a basic measure of free agency’ (2001, p.55), South *et al.* conclude, although auto-protection strategies ‘may be crucial for survival, they rarely provide the degree of safety, security, and dignity that people need’ (2012, p.iii). This substantiates observations by Levine *et al.* that the resilience agenda is actually little more than ‘wishful thinking’ (2012, p.4). Further, based on their assertions that the agenda actually offers little more than what people can do for themselves (*Ibid*), the above illustrates that protection translated as resilience or as auto-protection actually leaves individuals at risk fully exposed to on-going violence. Thus, building on Nordstrom’s observation that ‘violence reconfigures its victims’ (2004, p.59), the next chapter explores the risk of this perpetual exposure leading to a greater propensity for the use of offensive violence as a means of auto-protection.

6.4 Conclusions

With observers being ‘impressed by the mere fact of survival’ (IFRC 2004, p.17), the idea of resilience has been romanticised (*Ibid*, p.24). These romantic notions underpin assertions that auto-protection is a viable protection option in acutely violent contexts. Building on the notion of empowerment, individuals at risk have been recast as the agents

¹⁰⁴ Oxfam for example underlines the difficulties of resilience-building in conflict contexts (Hillier & Castillo 2013, p.18; see also: DFID 2011c, p.9).

¹⁰⁵ Others emphasise ‘value for money’ as a hidden motive driving the macro level emphasis on ‘resilience’ (Frankenberger, Campbell, *et al.* 2012, p.1; see also: DFID 2011b, p.19; Hargreaves *et al.* 2012, p.22; Hillier & Castillo 2013, p.20; Levine *et al.* 2012, p.1).

of their own protection in the absence of formal protective institutions – despite the magnitude of the deadly violence they face. With protection failures being spun as opportunity, individuals at risk are expected to draw on their inherent capacity to ‘struggle well’ in the face of ‘adversity’. In this, the inherent value judgement placed on peoples’ capacity to ‘struggle well’ establishes their *responsibility* to thrive. While alleviating the burden for those who fail in their legal, political and/or moral responsibilities to protect people at risk, the responsibility to protect is transferred onto the shoulders of those at risk.

However, although people at risk do demonstrate an astoundingly impressive capacity to ‘struggle well’ in the face of adversity, this independent agency cannot substitute for the promise embodied in global protection norms, a promise which according to the global protection vision is to be delivered through formal institutions. Global captivity with what proves to be an impressive capacity to survive obscures the fact that there are absolute limits to individual agency, especially when it relates to staring down the barrel of the perpetrator’s gun. As two young men in South Sudan said, ‘imagine if you were just there and a group of people arrived and started killing you; you would do anything you could to try to protect yourself’ (2M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec09). Of course you would. But there are obviously limits to this.

The capacity to survive is inevitably overwhelmed in the face of oppressive armed violence. Further, people are deeply affected by the deeply personalised nature of the violence. Commentators observe that a breakdown of order often causes individuals ‘to resort to preemptive violence’ due to insecurity (Kalyvas 2006, p.61; see also: Kaplan 2009, p.5; Keen 2008, p.20; Rotberg 2004, p.28). In this line, two other young men in Juba observed that this kind of violence ‘forces everyone to fight; if you don’t fight you will be killed by ethnicity; it is not our will to turn our country to war again; but now we will all be forced to fight’ (2M,Youth reps,PoC-Juba,Oct30). From a slightly different angle, another group of youth concluded that ‘if they fail with peace; we the supporters will have to join the armed struggle’ (2M,young-man,PoC-Juba,Oct30). Others added that ‘if this is going to go on like this, just let me become a soldier’ (3M,tea-shop,Koch,Dec08).

This begins to shed light on the important distinction that Gilligan makes between so-called ‘defensive violence’ which reflects the victims’ attempt to ward off an attack, and ‘aggressive or offensive violence’ (2000, p.98). This shift towards the use of more offensive violence as a means of auto-protection is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7 : Protection as Offensive Auto-Protection

'Violence reconfigures its victims'
(Nordstrom 2004, p.59).

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have sketched the diversity of violence that individuals occupying the micro spaces of "fragile protection zones" are exposed to. They have also sketched the progressive narrowing of the global promise of protection by the various actors charged with translating that promise into an operational reality. However, regardless of how it is articulated, this operational translation has largely failed to deliver protection where it is most urgently needed. Thus, with little buffering their exposure to the on-going violence, the resilience agenda calls on individuals at risk to step up and protect themselves. Rather than being the so-called 'worthy victim' in need of saving, these individuals are rather imagined as 'empowered' and are thus expected to 'struggle well' in the face of adversity.

In fact, people caught up in acutely violent circumstances are clearly not passive in the face of oppressive violence. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the power dynamics of violent contexts cannot be under estimated. Despite struggling to 'struggle well', self-protection strategies are for the most part reduced to that of avoidance and toleration. Moreover, those who manage survival do not escape such exposure unscathed. As such, rather than seeing themselves as resilient and empowered, respondents systematically emphasised a sense of powerlessness and vulnerability, repeating that 'there is nothing we can do; we have no rights; we have no force; we can only stay calm' (2M,artisans,Zemio,Dec18); 'we are beaten; now we can only hide ourselves' (1M&1F,Pastor-Baptiste,on hill,Ndele,Mar15).

It is in this sense that Nordstrom says that perpetual exposure to violence eventually 'reconfigures its victims' (2004, p.59; see also: Bourgois 2004, p.433; Kalyvas 2006, p.56). As an example, in South Sudan many referred to the enduring consequences of the previous civil war, with one young man claiming that 'because everyone has grown up in the war, people's minds are set to over-react' (1M,trans,Rumbek,Nov04). Agreeing that 'people are now having that thing within them [ie: psychological trauma]', another added that 'they can easily be provoked; if they are not careful, something violent can come out' (1M,Trans,Bor,Oct05). Explaining in further depth that 'our people have been traumatized by war' another young man went on to explain that 'now people are irritable; they are short-tempered; they are always over-reacting; the whole community is like this,

even those who are educated; we are raised like this; even I, as an educated one struggle to control my temper; I always feel the idea to react aggressively' (3M, reflections, Rumbek, Nov04).

Reflecting similar trends but referring to the current crisis in South Sudan, one man explained that 'this is a hopeless life; people have lost hope; without hope you just have to fight; over any small thing we fight; people say "I cannot think; I can only fight"' (1M, in tent, Juba-PoC, Oct28). Especially male youth are considered volatile, with one man stating that 'these young ones are thinking too much; they have lost too much; they might have lost their father or their mother; they are wondering about their future; now they can think to just fight; they can even just kill someone' (1M, yellow youth-colleague, Bentiu-PoC, Nov25); 'they are easily provoked; they are always willing to fight' (1M, humble-leader, Bentiu-PoC, Nov23). More broadly, one man added that 'now people think too much about what they have lost; they only think of fighting back' (1M, in-tent, Juba-PoC, Oct28).

With commentators warning that 'feelings of vulnerability and woundedness are dangerous' (Scheper-Hughes 2008, p.37; see also: Pupavac 2001, p.365), Keen adds that a sense of powerlessness can 'feed into the assertion of power through violence' (2008, p.68; see also: Arendt 1969, p.37; Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.241; Gilligan 2000, p.109; Kalyvas 2006, pp.55–56; Weber 2011, p.362). As such these dynamics create a potentially explosive underpinning for auto-protection. As increasingly volatile individuals are expected to perform as their own 'protectors', the risk is that auto-protection in the form of 'defensive violence' is transformed into that of 'aggressive or offensive violence' (Gilligan 2000, p.98).

As the use of armed violence emerges as a prominent means of auto-protection in the micro spaces, the inadequacy of macro level assumptions of dichotomous and homogenous groups of 'combatants' as armed perpetrators and 'non-combatants' as innocent civilians is fully exposed. As opposed to 'the binary opposition between victims and perpetrators', the micro level perspective reveals that any given individual can have either or both identities (Loytomaki 2012, p.19; see also: Baaz & Stern 2009; Holstein & Miller 1990, p.109; Meredith 2009, p.263).

This recalls Fierke's 'field of relationships' which suggests a fluidity between all of the roles of 'threatened', 'protected', 'protector', and 'threatener' (2007, p.51). While the previous chapter demonstrates how the 'threatened' are expected to transform themselves into their own 'protectors', this chapter looks at how the 'threatened' can also transform into a new version of 'threateners'. Moreover, this fluidity of roles also influences how people at risk perceive those around them within the micro spaces of armed conflict, with

the context of dramatic risk often provoking extreme processes of ‘othering’ in which neighbours, as co-victims, can be reimagined as enemies, and thus as yet another embodiment of ‘threateners’. When recast as a threat, the very soft targets of neighbours can be quickly reconceived as legitimate targets of the offensive violence framed by the self-perceived victims as auto-protection.

Such dynamics of violence were especially evident in the second phase of the crisis in CAR, where the extreme protection failures throughout the first year of the crisis provoked a dramatic social fracturing which eventually erupted into deadly civilian-on-civilian violence. With religion emerging as *the* critical social marker for identifying the ‘other’, a deadly social rupture was pulled deeply into the private sphere and even into families, forcing some to flee under lethal threat from their own brothers.

However, prior to the current crisis, an important level of religious tolerance was evident in CAR. For example, as a man who had been forced to flee to Cameroon (let’s call him Ibrahim) described his personal religious faith as Islam, he stated that ‘I have many Christian family members; I grew up in a Christian home’. He explained that his Muslim father had married his Christian mother, and although local rules generally dictate that such a woman would become a Muslim, in actuality they often identify with both religions. Consequently, the children of such households were often free to determine for themselves which religion they would adopt. In Ibrahim’s case, he chose Islam, but as was common, married a Christian wife. This intertwining of religions within any given family was widespread with respondents systematically agreeing that prior to this crisis, ‘Christians and Muslims lived together as brothers; we worked together; we had no problems’ (25M, Muslim focus-group, Lolo, Sept13). Another man from a similarly mixed family reiterated that ‘we were together; we were very integrated; we had no problems’ (1M, mixed-fam, Kentzou, Sept20).¹⁰⁶

Thus, it was with utter dismay that Ibrahim recounted the transformation that took place in which non-Muslims reimagined their Muslim neighbours and even sometimes their brothers as mortal enemies. He exclaimed that now ‘my little brother of the same father is now anti-Balaka; he is the one who chased me away from my home; I spent 18 days in the bush hiding from my own brother’ who had threatened to kill him and his family, forcing them to flee CAR. Now as a refugee in Cameroon, Ibrahim emphasised that ‘I want to go back [to CAR]; I want to go home; a person cannot abandon their country’. However, he looked to the future with trepidation, worrying that ‘when I try to go back, it will be the family of my mother...my own family will kill me; this is sure; my brother could come again

¹⁰⁶ In her report on CAR, Bangura agreed that ‘this extreme animosity is new’ (2014a, p.2).

with a machete to kill me or my family' (1M,trans mixed-family, Mbili,Sept18). Indeed, underlining that for some, 'their own families have tried to kill them' an Imam working with the CAR refugees wondered 'how can these people overcome this; how can these ones recover; they might eat again at the same table, but it will be difficult' (1M,Imam, Kentzou, Sept20).

Referring to this as the 'injurious nature of war', Scarry underlines that such dynamics are all too often relegated to simple 'consequence rather than the actual focal point of war' (1985 cited in Sylvester 2012, p.484; see also: Richards 2004, p.11; Kalyvas 2006, p.20). This again underlines the need to 'analytically decouple *civil war violence* from civil war' (Kalyvas 2002, p.3; see also: Arednt 1969, p.8; Malešević 2010, p.332). With the notion of '*violence*' drawing focus to 'the interpersonal level of legitimate physical hurt' (Schroder & Schmidt 2001, p.14; see also: Kalyvas 2006, p.19), the need to centre the human body as a unit of analysis is highlighted (Gilligan 2009, p.131; Migdal 2001, p.173; Riches 1986a, p.vii; Sylvester 2012, p.483). This is the objective of this chapter.

Recalling that social norms are a primary structure of influence (Finnemore 1996a, p.154; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Sikkink 2011, p.211), this chapter explores the evolution of norms governing the use of violence in local spaces. However, rather than assuming the primacy of globally articulated norms, which largely fail to penetrate the micro spaces of FPZs, this chapter looks at the (re)construction of local social norms within these extremely precarious circumstances. It demonstrates that these normative adaptations stem from the 'reconfiguring' of individuals due to exposure to violence.

Building on the constructivist assertion that 'ideas matter' (Dessler 1999, p.124), and the notion that norms are socially constructed, this chapter seeks to unpack the logic that shapes which ideas matter. Constructivist notions of learning stress that individuals proactively construct knowledge and meaning for themselves 'within the constraints and offerings of the learning environment' (Liu & Matthews 2005, pp.387-388; see also: Hein 1991), building on existing knowledge (Hein 1991). Being by definition, education and information scarce environments, people typically have little access to information outside of that generated locally. Thus, people are often left to make sense of what are essentially incomprehensible circumstances.

In this sense, the first section of this chapter looks at identity reformation and the socially constructed notion of victimhood in FPZs. It shows that, being grounded in perceptions of risk, victimhood is inevitably consolidated in antagonistic relationship with the 'other', which fosters the reimagining of former neighbours and even brothers as enemies. Building on this re-conception of their world, the second section returns to the

idea of norms, exploring how the adaptation of local socially constructed norms, especially that of revenge is used to 'justify' a shift from defensive to offensive violence as a means of auto-protection. The final section underlines that while such micro level dynamics of violence are seldom visible through the macro lens, they often eventually *drive* the larger dynamics of the armed conflict.

7.2 Violence Reconfigures Individuals – Redefining Identities

This section sketches how crisis situations provoke social reorganisation around the simplistic, albeit antagonistic frame of 'us' and 'them' which lays the foundation for justifying the use of deadly violence as auto-protection. This process consists of people at risk identifying a progressively more restrictive notion of community, while excluding those who fall outside of that delineation. In FPZs, the sense of community is constructed around the common sense of victimhood. However, founded on a sense of risk, the notion of victimhood is inevitably constructed on an antagonistic 'bi-polar' logic which assumes that 'if you are not with us, you are against us' (Keen 2000, p.6). As such, the first subsection looks at the social construction of self-perceived victimhood. But existing in inherent antagonism with the 'other', the second subsection examines the mechanics of 'othering' in which former neighbours and sometimes family members are reframed as enemies.

7.2.1 Self-perceived Victimhood – Constructed on perceptions of risk

Scholars describe victimhood as 'self-perceived' and 'socially constructed' (Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.233; see also: Holstein & Miller 1990, p.104). Thus, depending on the perspective of the constructor, the notion of 'victim' as it relates to protection has many faces. For example, although human rights theorists claim that the purpose of human rights is to empower individuals at risk (Ignatieff 2001, p.18; Robinson 1998, p.46), it is actually the notion of the 'worthy victims' (Warren 2007, p.263) which spurs the global protection regime to respond (Jeffery & Candeia 2006, p.290). Quite the opposite of an empowered individual, this worthy victim is presented as 'a passive recipient of experience' (Pupavac 2001, p.364; see also: Fassin & Rechtman 2009, p.xi; Scheper-Hughes 2008, p.39; Tarlo 1995, p.2921). Being stripped of agency, they are construed as 'helpless, powerless, unable to make choices for themselves, and forced to endure forms of pain and suffering' (Merry 2007b, p.195; see also: Loytomaki 2012, p.19; Warren 2007, p.263). Being seen as 'deserving of sympathy, support, outside help, and intervention by others to vanquish the victimiser' (Smyth 2000, p.132), this framing aims to generate the urgent 'need to protect those who cannot protect themselves' (Merry 2007, p.201).

However, as indicated in the previous chapter, in the face of repeated failures of the global protection regime to deliver on the promise of protection for this 'worthy victim', the notion of auto-protection has emerged. From the macro perspective, this conception of protection is constructed on the idea of resilience and the empowered individual. But rather than being defined in relation to the state as implied in legal positivism, the conception of empowerment that underpins the resilience agenda rather presumes an inherent human capacity to 'struggle well' in the face of adversity.

In reality, in the face of on-going violence that overtly targets civilians, rather than feeling empowered, respondents have systematically emphasised their sense of vulnerability.¹⁰⁷ This reflects the fact that the notions of resilience and vulnerability are actually 'relative concepts' (Adger & Kelly 2001, p.19; see also: Miller *et al.* 2010, p.1; Walsh 2003, p.52) having an inverse relationship (Frankenberger *et al.* 2012, p.5; Klein *et al.* 2003, p.7; Manyena 2006, p.441; McLaughlin & Dietz 2008, p.100). This was captured in the words of a local leader in CAR who, while asserting that 'we are not passive; we have ideas' equally underlined that 'we cannot do miracles'. Stressing that 'we have no force, no means', he stated that 'now we are just concentrating on survival' (1M,CdG, Osman,Zemio,Dec20). Thus, as people's sense vulnerability escalated, they simultaneously saw themselves as less able to manage the challenges they faced.

Nevertheless, as the acuity of a context escalates, the importance of protection as auto-protection increases. But as has been demonstrated, this approach to protection ultimately relies on the capacity of individuals at risk to fend for themselves. In this, the notions of 'collective protection' and the importance of 'interdependence' (Buzan 1991, p.2; see also: Fry 2006, p.255; Walsh 2003, p.54) are critical. Reliable relationships are paramount (IFRC 2004, p.23; Ogata & Sen 2003, p.11; South *et al.* 2012, p.7; Walsh 2003, p.53). And it is on this basis that the antagonistic 'us' and 'them' dynamic emerges from within what might have been a relatively cohesive community.

With Migdal telling us that 'powerful common understandings or meaning' generate cohesion among individuals by 'forming a strong relational glue that binds them together' (2001, p.7), the commonness of shared traumatic experiences is recognised as a powerful glue that pulls people together (Fierke 2007, p.132) in FPZs. Building on Nordstrom's idea that people are reconfigured through violence (2004, p.59), Bourgois adds that people 'do not simply "survive" violence as if it somehow remains outside of them' but are rather fundamentally altered (2004, p.433).

¹⁰⁷ A sense of vulnerability reflects a sense of 'susceptibility' to harm and the inability 'to cope with adverse effects' (Adger 2006, p.269; 2000, p.348; see also: Frankenberger, Campbell, *et al.* 2012, p.48).

As people try to make sense of their plight, a self-perceived sense of 'victimhood' based on vulnerability is consolidated in the toxicity of woundedness that results from prolonged exposure to extreme, imminent and deadly threat. In this, Kelman suggests that '[v]ulnerability and hazard combine in different ways to yield risk' (2011, p.2; see also: Cundill *et al.* 2014, p.5). In this Walsh underlines that the 'grappling with adversity strengthens a sense of coherence within the given group' (Walsh 2003, p.61). Further, given that the sense of victimhood is largely constructed on the perception of 'risk' which is, in itself, also socially constructed (Kasperson 1992, p.161; Rayner 1992, p.86; Sjoberg *et al.* 2004, p.10; Slovic 1992, p.120),¹⁰⁸ this 'collective sense of victimhood' becomes both the glue and the 'prism' through which this solidarity group understands their world (Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.236). As such, the following subsections look at how this self-perceived sense of victimhood is constructed.

7.2.1.1 Central African Republic

People's sense of risk, vulnerability, and thus victimhood was re-enforced on a daily basis in CAR through direct exposure to the Séléka. While reiterating that 'people are being targeted' (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar09), respondents asserted that 'we fear the rebels because of their aggressivity; they can attack at any time; they are unpredictable; they have their arms; they will shoot & kill people if they meet any resistance; they are unreliable' (5m&3F,Big-Bro of IDPs,Batangafo,Feb21); they have no morality, we cannot count on them being reasonable; they have no sense of humanity' (1M,teacher&calm wife; Cité Jean-23II,Aug07).

Describing them as volatile and unpredictable, respondents repeatedly stressed that 'our biggest worry is the people with guns' (7M,Muslim,Ndele,Mar12). Many underlined that 'the Séléka has installed themselves in the town with their arms; we are now living together with them and their arms' (3F,poor@base,Ndele,Mar09); 'now we are together with the armed men all the time' (3F,inside,focal-point,Ndele,Mar16). This constant exposure perpetuated a deep sense of dread, with respondents systematically complaining that 'the armed men circulate and menace; we are always afraid; we hear gunfire; everyone is afraid of stray bullets' (1M&1F,PastorBaptiste on hill,Ndele,Mar15).

Risk scholars add that repeated intimate exposure to the most feared threats, along with uncertainty amplifies perceptions of risk (Sjoberg *et al.* 2004, p.7; see also: Renn 1992, p.56). Reflecting this, countless respondents stressed that 'the Séléka are

¹⁰⁸ Defined as 'the likelihood that an individual will experience the effect of danger' (Sjoberg *et al.* 2004, p.7; see also: Kasperson 1992, p.154), one's perception of risk informs the sense of 'the likelihood, or probability' of being exposed to the 'adverse effect of a hazard' (Lowrance 1976 cited in Short 1984, p.711; see also Bourque *et al.* 2013, p.616).

always there with their arms; we don't know what is going to happen tomorrow or the next day' (3F,inside,focal-point, Ndele,Mar16); 'we can't know what the future will be; maybe they will come again tomorrow' (1M,teacher;calm-wife;Cit-jean23-II,Aug07). This unpredictability re-enforces peoples' sense of lack of control (Sjoberg *et al.* 2004, p.9), which in itself exacerbates anticipation of problems. As a very animated albeit cowed group of women said, 'the Séléka are there, they are always watching us; they are listening; they can come and beat us at any moment' (10F,Christ-laughing@Séléka, Ndele,Mar16).

Corresponding with Hein's notion of locally generated meaning (1991), Kasperon *et al.* underline that experiences with direct incidents increase the 'memorability and imaginability of the hazard' and heighten perceptions of risk (1988, p.184; see also: Coker 2009, p.14; Pells 2012, p.565). Building on this, Strathern and Stewart point out that 'people create their own fears out of the imagination of possible horrors' (2006, pp.8–9). In this sense, our mechanic man under Séléka surveillance noted that 'we are always worried; with all that has happened so far, we cannot remain calm' (1M,Safari-man,Ndele, Mar13). In fact, suggesting that the armed actors actually strategically exploit this perpetually cumulative sense of risk, a group of women added that 'the armed men regularly fire their guns in the air just to intimidate the population' (18F,Christians on hill;Ndele,Mar15).

All of this fuels Pells' observation that perceptions of risk 'can be cumulative and compounded' (2012, p.565). With a local Pastor explaining that 'people remain panicked in these circumstances; they are always waiting for the bad periods to return; they are waiting for the next problems' (1M,Pastor,Mboki,Jan19), others added that 'because we hear a lot of gunfire; we cannot stay calm' (3M,CdQ Christians,Ndele,Mar13). Respondents regularly reiterated that 'people are afraid; we are always fearing the men with arms' (2F,wives-Muslim,Ndele, Mar12); 'we have only fear; we continue with our lives, but we are always in fear' (3M,CdQ-Christians,Ndele,Mar13).

In this, scholars emphasise that dread plays a critical role in generating the sense of risk (Fischhoff *et al.* 1984, p.129; Sjoberg *et al.* 2004, p.13), with Nordstrom underlining the fact that 'maiming and murder of a few will terrify the many' (2002, p.278). As such, people in communities suffering repeatedly attacks explained that 'everyone expects the problems to recur; we are told the rebels will come again; so we are afraid' adding that 'we are always waiting; thinking something bad is going to happen suddenly; but we don't know what' (1M,CdQMuslim+5M,Muslim-youth,Bat,Feb22); 'each person is thinking something bad is going to happen; maybe in one hour or in one day; we don't know when;

but everyone is worried that it will happen; everyone has anxieties' (1M,PastorEpostolique, Ndele,Mar11).

Acknowledging this tendency towards amplification, Bar-Tal *et al.* suggest that it causes an increased sensitivity to threatening information, with individuals becoming 'hyper-vigilant, constantly searching for threats' (2009, p.252). Unfortunately, this dramatic sense of anticipating the worst was regularly realised.

7.2.1.2 South Sudan

Similar trends of cumulative dread were evident in South Sudan.¹⁰⁹ For example, those who tried to flee civilian-targeted attacks described being relentlessly pursued, explaining that 'the armed forces followed us to the bush' (1M,elderly-blind,Leer,Oct24). Countless respondents described various scenarios of repeated displacement, stating that 'when the soldiers arrived again, everyone fled again in all directions; we moved every two to three days; whenever we heard gunfire; we were always afraid' (4F,holding-back, Bentiu-PoC,Nov27).

In addition to being unpredictable, this violence was also extremely deadly with people reporting that 'they opened fire; they shot into the bush where we were hiding' (1M, school-teacher,Leer,Oct24); 'they were shooting randomly; people got caught by these bullets' (1M,eng@ market,Koch,Dec04); 'they killed a number of women by shooting into the bush where we were hiding' (1F,trans-house,Bentiu-PoC,Nov26); 'they threw bombs at us; this killed five people' (1F, good-com,eng,Leer,Oct25). Reflecting a profound sense of powerlessness in the face of deadly threat, one man recounted that 'people could not move; if you went out of your hiding place, you would be shot by the forces who remained nearby' (1M,school-teacher,Leer,Oct24).

Even though the intensity of such violence has ebbed and flowed during the past two years, the episodes of acute violence have established an intense sense of dread, making extreme levels of risk and vulnerability all too imaginable. Thus, even in less intense periods of crisis, respondents remain focused on imminent risk, explaining that 'with what we saw last dry season, we worry that we will have more violence this dry season' (1F,Young-girl@tea-shack,Ganyiel,Nov08); 'they will come again' (1F,Good-com, eng,Leer,Oct25).¹¹⁰

Pointing to the multiple psychological, social, institutional and cultural factors that interact with hazards in ways that heighten perceptions of risk, risk scholars underline what

¹⁰⁹ Although perceptions of risk are fuelled by immediate experiences of acute violence, this current crisis also comes on the tail of a decades-long previous civil war, and thus the repeated bouts of extreme violence in the current crisis are compounded by decades of similar experiences.

¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, these fears have repeatedly proven accurate.

they describe as the '*social amplification of risk*' (Kasperson 1992, pp.157–158; also see: Kasperson *et al.* 1988, p.177). For example, with Kasperson *et al.* suggesting that local means of information exchange are often major amplifiers (1988, p.184), a local leader noted that 'when something bad happens; people talk about it; everyone knows' (1F,CdQ, Bimbo,Jul28). Thus, while agreeing that 'rumours increase the problems; they cause fear' (2M,HR-guy;Berberati;Sept11), others added that 'there are rumours every day that something bad is going to happen' (2F,Muslim-Arab,Kabo,Feb14); 'we are always hearing about all the bad things; we keep hearing of people being killed' (2F,Fatima-I,July29).

Indeed, building on Besteman's observation that 'rumor, innuendo, and gossip' perpetuate 'a culture of fear through nurturing violent imaginings and inspiring violent action' (2002, p.8; see also: Strathern & Stewart 2006, p.9), in both cases it was often the most gruesome stories that gained traction in the rumour mill. Deeply disturbing reiterations of beheadings circulated widely in CAR, while South Sudan saw repeated reference to victims being forced to eat human flesh. Equally charged amplification circulated around the narrative about rape, with a group of women claiming that 'they put glass or objects into the vagina; these ones push wood inside of the vagina; in one case they cut the hand of a child and put it in the vagina of a woman; they cut the stomach of pregnant women; they kill the child if it is still alive' (5F,PoC2-orient,Bentiu,Nov22). This reflects the sense of powerlessness that comes with trauma.

Powerlessness in trauma

With Fierke suggesting that it results when 'normal perceptions of safety and consistency are destroyed by the continuous fear of attack' (2007, p.127; see also: Edkins 2002, p.245; Fassin & Rechtman 2009, p.2), Edins defines trauma as a tragic event in which 'everyday expectations of how the world works are severely disrupted' (2002, p.245; see also: Fassin & Rechtman 2009, p.2). Importantly, in FPZs, this is not one-off, but often the daily reality, with respondents repeatedly lamenting the fact that 'now we live in total chaos; nothing functions' (Christian focus-group@DRCoff,Bangui,July23); 'everything is being destroyed' (1F,Sandrine,Bangui,July24). Underlining the precariousness, a group of women emphasised that 'the situation is very difficult and complicated; it is tense, sensitive, and dangerous' (2F,Muslims@their compound,Ndele,Mar16).

Thus, while acknowledging that prolonged exposure to violence leads to 'chronic feelings of uncertainty, stress, and grief' Jeong emphasises the consequent 'sense of hardship, lack of control, and helplessness' (2008, p.13; see also: Csete&Kippenberg 2002, p.80; Jackman 2002, p.393). In this sense, Cyrulnik says that trauma leaves people feeling 'numb, incapable to adapt, to respond to a confusing world' (2008, p.26). Many

community leaders in CAR described exactly this among their populations, stating that ‘the morale of the population has been beaten by the rebels; everyone is demoralized, we have lost control of the situation; we have lost hope’ (1M,CdQ-Runga,Kabo, Feb07).

With Fierke specifically associating trauma with ‘a *loss of control* or powerlessness’ (2007, p.136), many respondents repeatedly claimed that ‘the population has no power’ (1M,CdG,QSultan,Ndele,Mar11); ‘we are powerless’ (3F,IDPs,Site-B,Kabo,Feb06); ‘we have no power to do anything’ (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar09). This sense of powerlessness is fundamentally grounded in the inherent power inequities, with respondents in CAR systematically repeating that ‘those ones with guns, they are all dangerous; they will shoot, you can’t resist against a gun’ (4F,Mus&Christ;Ndele,Mar15); ‘how can you resist against a gun’ (2F,Christ grandma, Ndele,Mar16); ‘if you resist, you can die’ (3F,poor@base, Ndele,Mar09).

A similar sense of powerlessness was particularly prevalent in South Sudan in relation to the risk of rape, with countless women stating that ‘we are afraid; but we can do nothing against these ones who are raping’ (3F,harassed@tea-shop, Koch,Dec09). Stating that ‘they can rape anyone; old ladies; they can even rape you [pointing at me]’, one group simply shrugged helplessly stating that ‘we can do nothing; we have no power’ (2M&1F, Building-House;Koch,Dec05). Others underlined that ‘the husband can do nothing; if he tries he will be killed’ (1F,Old-mama,Koch,Dec05).

Describing the despair this caused, one young man explained with quite some emotion that ‘when you are the brother or the husband and you know this is happening and you know you cannot rescue them...[with a long pause] you feel a strong pain in your heart; but you know you are helpless’ (1M,NatStaff,Koch,Dec10). A large group of men reflecting on the issue of rape added that ‘it is like a humiliation; when they keep repeating this; we see that we have no power; we have no voice; we have no influence; this is humiliating for us all’ (8M,Cows,Koch,Dec09). This desperate vulnerability in the face of on-going deeply personalised abuses and the consequent sense of powerlessness establishes the basis on which the ‘victim’ identity is constructed.

In this, people at risk become primarily concerned with themselves and those closest to them (Abbink 2001, p.202; Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.251; Clapham 2004, p.84). With extreme levels of fear, threat and loss driving people to identify with the group that is particularly committed to protect them (Abbink 2001, p.210; see also: Kasfir 2004, p.59; Rotberg 2004, p.28), Maček notes that as security stakes escalate, these so-called ‘solidarity groups’ are progressively restricted, eventually including only those from whom ‘one could expect total loyalty’, thus being unquestionably trusted to provide ‘unconditional

help' and 'existential security' (2001, p.202).¹¹¹ Indeed, referring to this as a reductionist "solitarist" approach to human identity',¹¹² Sen notes that in such situations people are increasingly identified according to single factors, causing very exclusively defined groups to emerge (2006, p.xvi). This inevitably generates what he refers to as the 'adversity of exclusion'; while the commonality of victimhood bonds the 'solidarity group' together, it expressly excludes the others (Ibid, p.15). It is on this basis that the antagonistic 'us' and 'them' dynamic emerges.

7.2.2 The Adversarial Other – Constructing 'us' & 'them'

As opposed to organising themselves in relation to the macro framing of 'combatant' versus 'non-combatant', the above begins to illustrate that, at the micro level, conflict affected populations rather organise themselves in 'us' and 'them' groups. However, commentators widely agree that in intensely threatening contexts, as people's sense of their own community narrows, an antagonistic sense of the 'other' emerges (Laclau & Mouffe 1985 cited in Bowman 2001, p.36; see also: Mouffe 2005, pp.15–16; Schroder & Schmidt 2001, p.2). As illustrated in the above vignette, while the experience of being victims of the Séléka's violence strengthened the bond among the majority non-Muslims, the minority Muslim portion of the civilian population was expressly excluded from this 'solidarity group' on the assumption that they were not being targeted.

With these reductionist identities being inevitably framed in competitive terms (Schroder & Schmidt 2001, p.2), they provoke 'the risk of social fragmentation, exclusion and opposition' (Bhavnani & Backer 2007, p.4; see also: Colletta & Cullen 2000, p.16). This is further aggravated by what Jacoby calls 'collective attitudes' and rumours that are rooted in 'anger, resentment and suspicion' (2008, p.20), which prompt what Keen calls 'fear of the ethnic "other"' (2000, p.9). For example, in CAR, the minority Muslim population was actually excluded because of rumours and suspicions that they were aligned with the Séléka (who were widely perceived as Muslim foreigners). Presumed to be bonded on the basis of their common religion, Muslim civilians were quickly merged with the Séléka in the imagination of the majority non-Muslim population. Reflecting what Keen describes as people 'abandon[ing] their sense of ambiguity and multiple truths' (2000, p.9; see also: Sen 2006, p.xvi), Muslims who had formerly been neighbours and sometimes family members as well were quickly reframed as a threat. A similar dynamic was seen in South

¹¹¹ While the extended family is often assumed to be such a group (Abbink 2001, p.202; Clapham 2004, p.84; Kasfir 2004, p.59; Merry 2005; Rotberg 2004, p.28; South *et al.* 2012, p.7), the introductory story puts such assumptions in question. In CAR, the divisiveness of religious identity trumped family ties as the single solidarity factor.

¹¹² Sen emphasises that in normal times, people have 'inescapably plural identities' (2006, p.xii).

Sudan in which civilian Dinka were merged together in the Nuer's imagination, with the government. The following subsections trace this consolidation of the antagonistic 'other' in each case.

7.2.2.1 'Othering' in South Sudan

Recalling the discussion from chapter two on whether the crisis was driven by political or ethnic factors, an African Union Commission of Inquiry emphasised the manipulation of 'ethnic animosity' (2014, p.3) that sits at the core of the crisis. That chapter sketched the extent to which the political and the ethnic are intertwined. Thus, even if the trigger of the crisis is understood as political, from the micro perspective Nuer respondents¹¹³ merged Dinka civilians together with those Dinka leading the government and the military. Given that President Kiir, as the head of the government, is a Dinka, the notion of government is for many, synonymous with the tribal group 'Dinka'.¹¹⁴ Further, the military is equally seen as largely synonymous with the government, with one man explaining that 'it was the military who started killing the people; but the military is the same as the government; those ones killed civilians' (1M,com-rep,Juba-PoC,Oct30).

From this perspective, many respondents were adamant that the crisis is tribal, with one Nuer man who had fled multiple attacks by government forces explaining that 'although it is the government forces who are killing people and burning our houses; this is not connected to the government, it is the *tribe* of the President' (1M,School-teacher,Leer, Oct24). As a local Nuer leader in a PoC-site concluded, 'the problem is now between Dinka and Nuer' (1M,leader, Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). Many agreed that 'this is the Dinka; the Dinka came to kill the Nuer' (2F,pretty-lady-en,shook-Ganyliel,Nov10); 'it is the Dinka who are killing the innocent people of Nuer' (1M,trans,Bor-PoC,Dec13).

Further compounding this are reports that 'civilians also participated, apparently taking advantage of the prevailing lawlessness' (Amnesty International 2014b, p.33). Indeed, Nuer respondents similarly claimed that in mixed neighbourhoods, Dinka civilians were allegedly 'looting our households; they indicated our houses to the government soldiers; even these Dinka civilians were killing the Nuer' (3F,IDPs from Bor,Ganyliel,Nov 08). As such, although some noted that 'before we did not have that in our minds', most respondents agreed that 'now the problem is between Nuer and Dinka' (1F,good-com-en, Leer,Oct25). As one group of women concluded, 'at the beginning it was a problem with the government; but at last it became tribalism; now it is between the Dinka and the Nuer; this is now tribalism' (5F,PoC2-orient,Bentiu,Nov22). This micro level analysis pulls people

¹¹³ During my field research, I was able to access especially Nuer areas.

¹¹⁴ On the flip-side, Nuer respondents also stated that 'now the government sees the civilians as the enemy' (1M&2F,Ganyliel,Nov12) thus making 'Nuer', 'civilians' and the 'Opposition' synonymous.

out of the 'combatant' versus 'non-combatant' framing and rather merges civilians together with the actual armed actors. Reorganising along the lines of the antagonistic 'us' and 'them' frame, tribal identity emerges as the divisive indicator.

The common experience of suffering which bonds of the 'solidarity group', is amplified in this case by what Gotnyial refers to as a 'time honoured tradition of an injury to one is an injury to all' (2014). As one woman explained, 'if you are of my tribe and another one hurts you; I must involve myself; I must take revenge when we are of the same tribe; if you are my relative, I must fight with the others' (1F,elder-with-grandkids,Leer,Oct23). Thus, while the internal bonds are amplified, so too is the inherently antagonistic view towards the 'other', which as a whole is perceived as being collectively responsible for the group's suffering.

This generic antagonism was continually perpetuated. For example, one man suggested that as a Nuer, 'you have to think that when the Dinka find you, definitely they are going to kill you' (1M, trans,Koch,Dec04). Others added that 'if you are Nuer, you know you can just get killed' (1M, Bor-PoC,Dec13); 'either as a man or a woman; when you are Nuer you are immediately put in prison; you can be killed just like that; so we are now really understanding that the Nuer will be killed' (1F,good-com,eng,Leer,Oct 25).

In this, Nuer respondents were adamant that the Dinka as a whole were their threateners, claiming that 'they want to harm and destroy the whole Nuer tribe; now they have too much jealousy and hatred in their hearts; they hate us more than hate can be in their hearts' (1F,trans,Leer,Oct23). Indeed, maximising the sense of antagonism, many framed the violence in terms of revenge and even ethnic cleansing, arguing that 'this is revenge for them; they want to kill us all if they could' (1M,Captured,Bentiu-PoC,Nov25); 'they want to "complete" the Nuer; now they want to clean the Nuer tribe from South Sudan' (5F,orient,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). As a reflective group noted, 'if some clans are trying for [ethnic] cleansing; this pushes the violence to a level that cannot be controlled' (2M&4F,Curious-kid,Rumbek,Nov 05). However, the re-imagining of the 'other' was even more dramatic in the case of CAR.

7.2.2.2 'Othering' in Central African Republic

As indicated in the introduction of this chapter, it was widely reported that prior to the current crisis in CAR, the Muslim and Christian communities 'lived with each other, worked side by side and intermarried' (Bangura 2014a, p.2). Many respondents themselves agreed that 'we were together; we were very integrated; we had no problems' (1M,mixed-Fam,Kentzou,Sept20); 'Christians and Muslims lived together as brothers; we worked together; we had no problems' (25M,focus-group,Lolo,Sept13). Nevertheless, the

current crisis provoked a deadly fracture between these two communities. This fracture was grounded in the self-perceived victimhood of the majority non-Muslim population and the consequent antagonism for the 'other'.

Recalling Nordstrom's claim that violence is met in deeply personal ways (2002, p.277), a group of retired individuals underlined that the Séléka crisis 'has marked people; many are now victims, our parents have been killed, everything has been stolen; there is much animosity now' (2F&1M,retired-FACA,Kitigba,Aug05). Underlining the deep personalization of the on-going violations and abuses, they went on to explain that 'if the state is looted, that is one thing; but this has been very personal, targeting individuals, looting house to house; the resentment will be hard to contain' (2F&1M,Kitigba,Aug05). Others framed the on-going Séléka attacks as an affront to their dignity, with a group of women lamenting that 'they search for us like animals' (10F,Christ-laughing@Séléka,Ndele,Mar16). Citing countless traumas, respondents indicated that they were being pushed beyond their toleration capacity, emphasising that 'too many people are victims now' (2M&1F,students,Fouh4,Aug08).

Being confident in their undeniable status as 'victim', the majority non-Muslim portion of the conflict affected population progressively re-imagined their Muslim counterparts as the antagonistic 'other', progressively merging them with the Séléka. While some asserted that 'the Muslims have collaborated with the Séléka' (1M&1F,CdQ&wife,Fouh4,Aug08), others speculated that 'they are together with the Séléka; the Séléka has "transformed" the Muslims of CAR' (2F&1M,retired-FACA,Kitigba,Aug05); 'the Séléka has intoxicated all Muslims' (1M&1F,civil-workers;Begwe-PK12,Aug06). Capturing the irony, Wood observed that 'Muslims who lived in Bangui before the Séléka takeover had nothing to do with the new government, but the Christian majority came to hate them too' (2014).

Amnesty International similarly noted that 'the Christian community's strong anti-Séléka views, nurtured by rampant Séléka abuses, developed into widely shared anti-Muslim sentiment' in which many non-Muslims 'seemed to attribute responsibility for the Séléka's abuses to the Muslim minority as a whole, believing that Muslims were, at the very least, complicit in Séléka abuses' (Amnesty International 2014a, p.7; see also: ICC 2014a, p.20; Lombard 2014).

This was compounded by what Primo Levi described as 'grey zones' (1989, p.38),¹¹⁵ or what Nordstrom refers to as 'entangled interpersonal relationships' (2004, p.77) that are all too apparent at the micro level. For example, in CAR armed and uniformed men were regularly seen sharing motorbikes with civilian passengers or vice versa.

¹¹⁵ A 'grey zone' represents the ambiguity surrounding any such categories or groupings of people (Levi 1989, p.57).

Heavily armed individuals dressed as civilians mingled easily with heavily armed men in military uniform; both of whom commonly sat together in the central market, talking, laughing and enjoying meals together. Individuals were left to try to make sense of this very ambiguous environment. With Barter noting that sometimes ‘knowing who is a civilian and who is a combatant can be extremely difficult’ (2012, p.545; see also: Melzer 2009), many non-Muslims respondents simply concluded that ‘we cannot make a distinction at this time’ (2M,CdQ,old-guy,tracksuit,Fouh6,Aug02). Although Amnesty International reiterated that it was ‘the lawless and abusive nature’ of the Séléka’s that had led many Christians to blame ‘the country’s Muslim minority as a whole’ for Séléka’s actions (2013c, p.2; 2014a, p.5), any such distinction was lost.

The terms ‘Muslim’ and ‘Séléka’ became synonymous in the local discourse, with non-Muslim respondents blaming ‘the *Muslims*’ as a whole for their suffering, claiming that ‘they have killed our parents; we cannot accept this; we cannot pardon them’ (1M,CdQ, Fatima-I,July29). Former neighbours, and brothers in some cases, were consolidated in the minds of the self-perceived victim as responsible for their suffering. However this is not the end of the cycle.

Observing that it leads to the loss of ‘any human sympathy and natural kindness that we may normally have’ for the ‘other’ (2006, p.xvi), Sen stresses that such social fracturing establishes the foundation on which hatred is constructed (2006, p. xvi). Non-Muslim respondents widely reiterated that ‘we don’t like the Muslims with what they have done’ (2M&1F,students,Fouh4,Aug08); ‘now we think all Muslims have a bad heart’ (1F&1M,giggling girl&son,dedege-II,Aug07). In casting *all Muslims* in the role of ‘threateners’, non-Muslim respondents increasingly claimed that ‘now it is the Muslims who fight against us’ (1M&1F,CdQ&wife,Fouh4,Aug08); ‘they have killed too many people’ (2M&1F,students,Fouh4,Aug08); ‘now we are their enemies’ (Christ-focus-group@DRCoff,July23).

As Cyrulnik says, it is eventually the hatred of the ‘other’ that is the ‘cohesive factor’ that bonds the self-perceived ‘victims’ together and consolidates the ‘other’ as a threat (2008, p.27; see also: Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.236). Further, reflecting what Keen calls ‘fear of the ethnic “other”’ (2000, p.9; see also: Sen 2006, p.xvi), a non-Muslim community leader contended that ‘all Muslims are Muslims first; even if it is my brother, I must now approach him with caution; all Muslims are now all together; they are all against us Christians’ (1M&1F,CdQ&wife,Fouh4,Aug08). Others concluded that ‘now we fear them all’ (2F&1M,young-adults,reflective,Castor,Jul30).

In this *all Muslims* were recast as posing imminent threat. Non-Muslim respondents were adamant that ‘the Muslims have come here to massacre the Christians’ (2F, kidnapped-boy, Guito5, Aug 02); ‘they want to kill all the Christians’ (2F, petite-com, Combattant, Aug01); ‘if we are left like this, all the Christians will die’ (3F, @big house, Kitigba, Aug05). In this, their self-portrait of the ‘suffering, helpless, and vulnerable’ victims (Merry 2007, p.199; see also Loytomaki 2012, p.16) corresponds with the above discussed ‘worthy victim’ (Warren 2007, p.263) to which the global protection regime responds. In this case, victimhood emerges as an ‘identity or status’ (Meredith 2009, p.260; see also: Loytomaki 2012, p.18), and is again ‘perceived as a “social asset”’ (Starman 2006, p.337), however it has a very particular added value in relation to offensive auto-protection.

For example, while the above consolidates the status of victimhood, this victim is taken as inherently innocent, bearing no responsibility for what is happening, while in contrast to those painted as the threatener ‘is by extension considered responsible and guilty’ (Meredith 2009, p.260; see also: Holstein & Miller 1990, p.108; Hopgood 2013, p.26). Assumptions of ‘inherent innocence’ entitle the victim ‘to sympathy and ethical indulgence reserved for those who suffer’ as well as ‘the corollary right to legitimately pass the blame to others’ (Starman 2006, pp.327–328; see also: Meister 2002, p.102).¹¹⁶

They are able to exploit what Kalyvas describes as the ‘flawed perception that victimhood and guilt are mutually exclusive categories – hence victims cannot be guilty’ (Kalyvas 2006, p.21; see also: Jeffery & Candea 2006, p.291). On the assumption that ‘there is all the difference in the world between *suffering* an atrocity and *committing* it’ (Meister 2002, p.102 emphasis added), especially from the macro level, there is resistance to the fact that ‘the line between perpetrators and victims is blurred’, thus denial of a zone in which victims can become perpetrators and vice versa (Kalyvas 2006, p.21; see also: Bourgois 2004, p.430; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004, pp.10–11).¹¹⁷

This is critical when juxtaposed with expectations of auto-protection. As indicated in the previous chapter, the absence of ‘official provision of security’ forces people into ‘taking the law into their own hands’ to ensure their security by whatever means necessary, including the use of violence (Goldstein 2007, p.51; see also: Keen 1998, p.46; Kalyvas 2006, p.61; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.18). Respondents in CAR readily noted that ‘when people are unhappy, they will take justice into their own hands’ (1F, Coopi, Mboki, Jan18). Respondents in South Sudan equally stated that ‘people will take the law

¹¹⁶ Talo refers to this as ‘co-victimization’, in which individuals transfer ‘victimhood onto friends, neighbours and total strangers in the effort to save oneself’ (1995, p.2921; see also: Bauman 1998 cited in Starman 2006, p.328).

¹¹⁷ This recalls both Levi’s ‘grey zone’ (1989, p.38), as well as the fluidity of Fierke’s ‘field of relationships’ (2007, p.51).

into their own hands' (1M,NatStaff, Rumbek,Nov03); 'they will turn to their own means, including revenge killing' (1M,INGO, NatStaff,Jonglei,Oct02).¹¹⁸

Indeed, getting at the emotive factors, Reeve adds that an absence of protection 'contributes to frustrations that over time can lead to or escalate violence' (2012, p.7; see also: Suhrke 2012, p.19; Amnesty International 2014b, p.17). Further, commentators add that the above adversarial reframing of society generates a very particular potential for sparking violence (Bhavnani & Backer 2007, p.4; Bowman 2001, p.37; Sen 2006, p.4).

For example, even moderates in CAR stated that 'now people have very bad memories; these feelings are strong; the hatred is there now; people want to do the same thing back to the Muslims' (2M,CdQ-advisors,Ngaragba,Aug05). The intensely personalized nature of abuses suffered in both cases studies triggered a desire for 'justice' or 'revenge' provoked a shift from what Gilligan calls 'defensive violence' which is the victim's attempt to ward off an attack, towards 'aggressive or offensive violence' or violence initiated by those concerned (2000, p.98).

In arguing that 'powerlessness corrupts', Keen underlines a sense of powerlessness can 'feed into the assertion of power through violence' (2008, p.68; see also: Bar-Tal et al. 2009, p.241). But in this case, constant exposure to threat causes 'a reduced capacity for empathy', causing people at risk grow 'unresponsive and callous to the suffering of others' (Kalyvas 2006, p.56; see also: Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.251). This begins to justify the intent to revenge against the Muslim civilians as opposed to the armed Séléka (FIDH 2014a, p.9). Further, the 'inherent innocence' of victimhood allows the self-perceived victim to 'utterly reject' the principles of humanity in favour of more immediate, extreme and self-managed solutions to their security problems (Wilson 2007, pp.359–360; see also: Harris-Short 2003, p.134; Keen 2008, p.215).

However, when they strike, they seek the softest possible targets. As Keen notes, when a perpetrator 'feels powerless in relation to one set of people, they might rather direct their violence towards another less threatening group' (2008, p.68). Given that the Muslim civilians have now been merged with the Séléka in the imagination of the non-Muslims, as these self-perceived victims-cum-perpetrators resort to offensive violence, they pit themselves against their neighbours and excluded family members as the softest targets possible. But, as Keen points out, this resorting to offensive violence is not the result of a collapsing of morality but rather 'it is typically twisted, distorted, perverted and

¹¹⁸ It is in this sense that Rodin reminds us that 'by independently seeking our own security, we degrade the security for all' (2014, p.259) – without the publically coordinated provision of security, we are returned to Hobbes' state of nature in which one's life is 'poor, nasty, brutish and short' (Hobbes 1651).

even inverted, with attack perhaps redefined as self-defence and restraint as weakness' (2008, p.68). The following section explores the complex normative adaptations that take place in order to justify this shift towards offensive violence as a means of auto-protection.

7.3 Reconstructing Local Social Norms – Justifying Offensive Violence

Recalling the constructivist perspective that identities, values, interests and behaviours are socially constructed through a process of socialization and that social norms are a primary structure of influence (Finnemore 1996a, p.154; Katzenstein 1996, p.2; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse & Sikkink 1999; Wendt 1999; Sikkink 2011, p.211), this section explores the evolution of norms governing the use of violence in local spaces. But rather than tracking the top-down trajectory of globally articulated norms, this chapter accepts that these norms largely fail to penetrate the micro spaces of FPZs. Further noting that these spaces are nevertheless far from norm-neutral, it explores the locally articulated social norms that govern the space.

Understood as socially constructed 'collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity' (Jepperson *et al.* 1996, p.54; Katzenstein 1996, p.5), norms embody expectations of what constitutes so-called 'proper behaviour'. However, Hopgood points out the double meaning of 'norms', which refer both to 'what is desirable and what is accepted practice' (2013, p.13). While globally articulated protection norms are typically aspirational and thus reflect the former, local norms governing the use of violence in FPZs often rather reflect what is considered 'acceptable'. In this sense Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois emphasise that at the micro level 'cultures, social structures, ideas, and ideologies shape all dimensions of violence, *both* its expressions and its repressions' (2004, p.3). Further, with Abbink noting that war-time rationale typically accepts that the rules are different than those of peacetime, 'what would otherwise be socially and morally unacceptable' is often legitimated (2001, p.203). Thus, this section explores how local norms are adapted to redefine acceptable practice in acutely violent contexts.

To some degree, this reflects a progressive normalization of violence, with Besteman explaining that when a context is 'thoroughly pervaded by violence', this violence is quickly 'normalized as part of the fabric of everyday life, even among the nonviolent members of the society' (2002, p.2; see also: Moser & Winton 2002, p.11; Nordstrom 2004, p.68). For example, even prior to the current crisis, respondents in South Sudan stated that 'we are war affected people; we are adapted to war; what is in many people's mind is killing' (1M, Youth-group representative, Rumbek, Sept25). Referring to the

previous civil war, an elderly woman suggested that ‘we have inherited violence, it is in our blood’ (1F,lucid older-lady,Rumbek,Sept20).¹¹⁹

Arguing more generally that war ‘destroys “civilized” principles and dispositions’, Kalyvas suggests that this is a result of being exposed to ‘constant hatred, violence, weapons, expecting to be shot in the back’ which can cause people to ‘loose reason’ (2006, p.56). Indeed, demonstrating what Fierke describes as the ‘toxic effect of violence on the individual mind’ (2007, p.126), a woman in hiding in a deeply rural area in South Sudan explained that ‘when the situation is so bad, people become traumatized’. Complaining that ‘it is now a full year that people have been worrying’ she stated that ‘this makes people think nothing good’ (1F,good-com-en,Leer,Oct25). A matriarch in the Bentiu PoC-site added that ‘as the situation gets worse, it destroys the minds of people; their minds are not good; they cannot judge; this situation destroys people’ (1F,big-mama,Bentiu-PoC,Nov22). In this sense, some analysts suggest that people facing perpetual exposure to deadly violence undergo ‘the collective equivalent of post-traumatic stress disorder’ (USIP 2001 cited in Suhrke 2012, p.2).

More individually, Bourgois suggests that prolonged exposure to pain and terror generates a psychological ‘pressure cooker’ which can distort social relations and thus provoke further violence (2004, p.431). In this vein, a group of traditional leaders in South Sudan agreed that ‘people get tired of being attacked; they must fight back; you must try by all means to get them back’ (6M,Traditional-Leaders,Rumbek,Sept24).¹²⁰ With Lutz suggesting that such experiences lead to a shifting of ‘general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force’ (2002, p.723; see also Adelman 2003, p.1122; Fierke 2007, p.196), Bar-Tal *et al.* note that in their woundedness and collective sense of victimhood, people at risk feel justified in resorting to further cycles of violence (2009, p.245). Normatively, Steenkamp explains that the traumatisation of large sections of a society can lead ‘to demoralization and a breakdown of normal social norms and values’ that would normally repress the use of violence (2005, p.264; see also: Cruz, 1998 cited in Moser & Winton 2002, p.11).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Many analysts point to a socialization or normalization of violence that has occurred in South Sudan (Jok & Hutchinson 1999; ICG 2011b, p.4; Patey 2007, p.1001; Scanlon 2008; HSBA 2007).

¹²⁰ Very similar patterns were evident in CAR, with a group of officials stating that ‘the hatred is there now; people want to do the same thing back to the Muslims’ (2M,advisors-CdQ,Ngaragba ,Aug05).

¹²¹ Suhrke notes ‘a reversal of customary prohibitions on killings’ (2012, p.2), while others point to the ‘unravelling of regional codes of warfare ethics’ (Jok & Hutchinson 1999, p.125) and the erosion of traditional authority structure in such circumstances (Baker 2009, p.94; Jok *et al.* 2004, p.6; McEvoy & LeBrun 2010, p.20; Reeve 2012, p.46; Walraet 2008, p.63).

Kalyvas combines this erosion of social controls and a reduction in the social costs of violent activities with the more concrete ‘unlearning’ of peaceful skills and the learning of new violent skills as factors that provoke the proliferation of the use of violence (2006, pp.55–56; see also: Bourgois 2004, p.432). In this some point to an emergent ‘culture of violence’, which Abbink defines as a set of ‘templates that define, stimulate, and condone violent behaviour’ (2001, p.140; see also Krause 2010, pp.36–37; Steenkamp 2005, p.254).

With traditionally suppressive frameworks being progressively supplanted by ‘new norms and values that *sustain* the use of violence’ (Steenkamp 2005, p.264), altered social values ‘allow, make possible, or even stimulate the use of violence’ (Cruz 1998 cited in Moser & Winton 2002, p.11).¹²² A ‘greater social tolerance of individuals’ violent behaviour’ emerges (Steenkamp 2005, pp.253–4). These new ‘violence-supporting norms and values’ are internalized and become ‘embedded in the broader value structures’ consolidating ever greater tolerance for violence as ‘a way of dealing with everyday issues’ (Ibid, pp.254–5). For example, Burke suggests that in accepting the idea that ‘might is right’ a population ‘begins to accept the suitability of violence as a method of resolving conflicts’ (2012; see also: Fierke 2007, p.196).

Highlighting other socially sanctioned ‘permissive factors’, Gurr points to ‘social myths, traditions and habits’ which often overtly promote the use of violence (cited in Crenshaw 2002, p.102; see also: Abbink 2001, p.123). Important in this, is the social norm of revenge. Being described as one of the most ‘pervasive, deep-seated, and widespread’ permissive factors, revenge is seen as ‘an elementary and nearly universal imperative’ and ‘a prime motivation for violence’ (Strathern & Stewart 2006, p.26; see also: Colletta & Cullen 2000, p.60; Fry 2006, p.xi). Indeed, while many commentators emphasise the critical role of revenge in perpetuating further cycles of violence (Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.245; Fierke 2007, p.132; Kalyvas 2006, p.58), in this case combines all too toxically with the above defined antagonistic ‘other’; the reduced empathy for the other; and this increased tolerance for the use of violence in acutely violent contexts. As a local analyst in South Sudan explained, ‘when people kill in revenge they don’t think about rights; a person just thinks that if someone kills my people, then I must do what I must do; he just thinks he must revenge’ (1M,INGONatStaff,Rumbek, Sept24). As such, the following sketches how revenge emerged as a substitute to protection in both the South Sudan and CAR crises.

¹²² This recalls Enloe’s point about *militarization* in which militaristic ideals increasingly penetrate civilian lives and are increasingly seen as both valuable and normal (Enloe 1984, p.3; 2000, p.3).

7.3.1 Revenge as Protection in South Sudan

In his analysis of the South Sudan crisis, the UNSG emphasised that ‘the ethnic dimensions of the conflict have engendered not only tremendous tragedy, but also anger between communities and the urge for revenge’ (2014a, p.16; see also: Gotnyial 2014). With Berger pointing out that in South Sudan ‘communal responsibility for murder - and avenging that murder - means that the act of one person is seen as the act of all who are related to that person’ (2014; see also: Jok *et al.* 2004, p.40), the tribal framing of the crisis not only pulls the violence fully into the private and personal sphere, but it also merges it with the social norm of revenge.

Revenge, as an extremely deeply embedded social norm in South Sudan, demands response, with a lucid elderly woman explaining that ‘if your relative is killed you *must* revenge; it is like that here; we must revenge when others do bad things like kill women and children’ (1F,lucid-older-lady,Rumbek,Sept20). Another woman stated that ‘there is no choice, we must revenge; it is not possible to ignore this part of our culture’ (1F,trans,Leer,Oct23). Relating this to the current crisis, with one woman explaining that ‘now many people have lost relatives; this makes them want to revenge’ (1F,Bent-nurse, Ganyliel,Nov09). Reiterating their hatred for the ‘other’, referring to the Dinka, Nuer respondents underlined that ‘these ones are our enemies now’ (2M&1F,Building-House; Koch,Dec05); ‘now there are great ‘jealousies’ [ie: resentments]; we are growing the hatred’ (1F,trans,Leer,Oct23). Thus, a group of local officials concluded that ‘the attacks in this county will have to be revenged; we are patient, but a man cannot be attacked and not revenge’ (4M,Administration Gan-sanu,Nov10).

However, revenge killing is clearly not a simple break down of morality. It is simply underpinned by a different logical frame. Key, is the widely held assumption ‘that the one who killed first has no right to live’ (1M,INGONatStaff, Rumbek,Sept24). Many stated that people will call for the killing of the one who killed first, with a religious representative explaining that ‘people believe that one deserves to be killed’ (1M,Father,Bentiu,Aug07). It is in this sense that respondents asserted that in the current crisis ‘when a person remembers that that one killed his family, he must kill him’ (1F,elderly with grands,Leer,Oct23). As such people speculated that ‘if there is a way to take revenge; if the people have the power to do this; they will want to do the same crimes back to the Dinka’ (1F,rainstorm,Leer,Oct24).

This reference to the ‘Dinka’ also reflects the principle of collective responsibility which compounds the above described merging of identities. With the groups as a whole defined as both responsible for the suffering, as well as posing a threat, communally-based targeting is widely accepted, if not expected. Respondents explained that an

appropriate revenge target might be ‘the one who originally killed, someone in his family, or someone more important in that one’s community so you can ensure maximum suffering’ (1M,translator,Rumbek,Sept25).

This in itself generates yet another problem. Reflecting observations by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois that ‘violence gives birth to itself’ (2004, p.1; see also: Nordstrom 2004, p.68; Schroder & Schmidt 2001, pp.14–16), many respondents acknowledged that revenge typically causes an escalation of violence. As two young men explained, ‘when someone is injured in a fight, this will quickly escalate because you must revenge your brother; you must injure one of that guys relatives’ (2M,translators,Mathiang). A group of women added that ‘if a man fights with someone and he is defeated, his family will have to become involved; the fighting will soon get big’ (5F,women,Bor,Oct08).

Nevertheless, significant social pressures perpetuate revenge practices, with one young man describing that ‘if your brother is injured or killed and you do not act, people will harass you; they say that your brother was hurt or killed and you did nothing; they ask who are you’ (1M,Youth-leader,Bentiu,Aug08). Such ‘inaction’ is considered profoundly shameful, with respondents underlining that those who do not meet their obligations ‘to act in the name of his brother’ will be ostracised by their community (2M,translators,Mathiang). Capturing its significance, a government official suggested that ‘communities usually want revenge more than they want the killing to stop’ (2M,SSRRC,Bor,Oct05). This norm thus has serious implications for the current crisis.

7.3.1.1 Revenge in the Current Crisis

Consolidating their self-perception of victimhood, and indicating an intent to revenge, Nuer respondents repeatedly noted that ‘what happened in Juba was a very bad thing; many Nuer were killed only because of their tribal background; this cannot be forgotten’ (7M,youth,near-comp,Leer,Oct24).¹²³ In this, respondents regularly tied their reflections on the violence to the obligation to revenge. Even moderates failed to see beyond it, explaining that ‘revenge is not a good solution, but our innocent people are being killed’ (1M,Head-County-Court,Ganyiel, Nov07); ‘revenge is not a good solution; but so many people have died from the Nuer side, including our engineers, people with degrees; because these ones have died; this will not be the end; we must revenge’ (1F, Good-com,eng,Leer,Oct25).

People repeatedly pointed to the deeply personal losses, with one man for example stating that ‘these ones have killed my children and my mother’ (1M,teacher-Nhial,Bentiu-

¹²³ ICG suggests that the ‘systematic targeting of Nuer civilians in Juba in the days following 15 December was perhaps the single most critical factor in mobilising Nuer to join Machar’s movement’ (2014, p.17).

PoC,Nov25). In this, a former soldier now staying in the Bentiu PoC-site explained that 'when someone has killed your parents, your children and your brother, you cannot sit together with them; you will only remember what he has done' (1M,former-soldier,Bentiu-PoC,Nov23). As such, a group of women added that 'the killing of women and children increases the shock and anger in our hearts; we must revenge in the same way' (2M&3F, IDPwoman-looted,Rumbek,Nov04). This provides some underpinning to the widely reported fact that 'the ethnic dimension has led to civilians joining in hostilities and attacks of retribution' (Amnesty International 2014b, p.8; see also: Giffen *et al.* 2014, p.9; ICG 2015, p.18; UNMISS 2014, p.23). External analysts further underlined that this has triggering 'a widening circle of reprisal and revenge' (ICG 2014a, p.11).

Reflecting Ban Ki-moon's observations that it is often the case that 'one round of violence ignites the next' (2012), the brutality characterising the current South Sudan crisis is believed to be rooted in unresolved resentments of the previous civil war. For example, HRW suggested that 'the pain and trauma caused by the past decades of brutal conflict has undoubtedly played into the extraordinary cruelty in the current conflict' (2014d, p.5; see also: Jok 2014, p.15). Some Nuer respondents themselves agreed that the violence was occurring 'because the Dinka want to revenge for a historic hatred for the Nuer; if their father was killed by a Nuer in the [previous] civil war, they want to revenge now' (3F,IDPs from Bor,Ganyliel,Nov08).

On this basis, others claimed that 'this time, they want to finish us; they are thinking to kill us; this makes us think of revenge; we don't want to make another war, but we must be thinking of revenge; if nothing changes people will go to kill the Dinka' (1M,School-Teach;Leer,Oct24). Indeed, many concluded that now the Nuer are obliged to revenge this most current round of violence.

With the ICG warning that 'the longer the violence continues, the more difficult it becomes to contain' (2014, p.11; see also: Leithead 2014), respondents indicated that such cyclic killing could get severely out of hand. For example, asking rhetorically 'if someone came to your house to kill your husband, your sons, your brothers, do you think you would eat together with them again', one local matriarch asserted that now 'the Nuer want "compensation" [ie: revenge] for what has happened; we will continue dying now; we have had so much suffering we will just continue like this; now we don't want peace; we want revenge' (1F,mamma,PoC3-Bentiu,Nov 22). In this she was suggesting that further losses are a small price to pay in order to gain their revenge. Others similarly stated that 'so many lives have been lost; now even if people kill the others, they feel they have not

done enough; they want to continue killing' (1M,NatStaff, Rumbek,Nov03). Very similar dynamics actually manifested in the second phase of the CAR crisis.

7.3.2 Revenge as Protection in Central African Republic

People in CAR spoke about the social norm of revenge in a very similar manner, with a group of female NGO staff explaining that 'you can't leave it if your brother is beaten; you must revenge; however, you can't revenge alone, a person must be supported by his friends whether he is right or wrong; he is loyally supported by friends; sometimes they even don't know the problem; this causes the situation to get big quickly' (4F,DRCNat Staff,CPF,Kabo,Feb08). Tying this to the explosiveness of the current crisis and reiterating the dimension of collective responsibility, a group of men explained that 'today, any problem will quickly be a problem for the [larger] community; if someone kills someone, the community of the one will quickly revenge on the other community' (3M,team,Bangui,July 24).

This merged all too well with the deeply personalized experiences of the violence and abuses unfolding during the first phase of the crisis. The civilian targeted violence fostered a strong sense of victimhood, and thus a dramatic desire for revenge. Again, many similarly acknowledged that vengeance would cause an uncontrolled escalation of violence. While especially women emphasised that 'we don't want to create this cycle', some nevertheless concluded that 'with what has happened; people will revenge; they must' (2F,eglise@base,Ndele,Mar09). Indeed, even in the very early stages of the crisis, many respondents spoke of taking revenge as though it was inevitable, with one group stating for example that 'if this continues, we will be forced to revenge; 'one day we will react; we will revenge against them all' (5M&2F,Youth,Ndele,Mar13). Others added that 'people must revenge' (2F,eglise@base, Ndele,Mar09);.

As the crisis progressed, these sentiments escalated, with self-perceived victims continuing to warn that 'now people have too many bad feelings; people want vengeance; some think now there is no other way but revenge' (2M,advisors-to-CdQ,Ngaragba,Aug 05). Demonstrating the passion driving this norm, a group of youth, who had quietly discussed a number of other issues became extremely agitated when talking of revenge, stating very adamantly that 'now we have the spirit of vengeance in our hearts; we are just waiting for the opportunity; we will kill Muslims in revenge for what they are doing to us now' (4M,Youth,Fouh4,Aug08). Countless non-Muslim respondents reiterated that 'now we are waiting for the time to revenge' (Christian-Focus-group,Bangui,July24).

These threats began to be realised in a horrifying manner one year into the crisis, with an estimated 1000 people killed in Bangui on the 4-5 December 2013 (OHCHR

2014a). Dramatically personalised civilian-on-civilian revenge violence quickly spread throughout much of the country, becoming progressively organized and leading to the eventual emergence of the anti-Balaka (Amnesty International 2014a, p.5; ICC 2014a, p.8),¹²⁴ and generating a distinctly new phase of the armed conflict.

7.4 Micro Dynamics Driving the Conflict

While much of the above illustrates how the larger dynamics of armed conflict are pulled into the micro spaces of FPZs, this section demonstrates how the micro dynamics of violence equally alter and indeed sometimes drive the broader conflict dynamics. While respondents acknowledged this likelihood in both cases, it was horrifically realised in CAR.

With Amnesty International reporting that ‘their fear, anger, and desire for revenge spurred the development of the predominantly Christian anti-Balaka’ (2014, p.5), this group of armed individuals targeted much of their violence against Muslim civilians (as opposed to the Séléka). As sketched above, this civilian targeting was justified on assertions that *all Muslims* were aligned with, if not collaborating with the Séléka (FIDH 2014a, p.10). The re-defining of all Muslims as traitors and as ‘foreigners’ fostered a distorted sense of nationalistic vengeance that asserted ‘*they must all leave or die*’, which in effect ‘justified’ either the killing or the forcible displacement of all Muslims from CAR (Ibid, p.9).

Unsurprisingly, the Muslim population consequentially blamed the Christian population collectively for abuses perpetrated by the anti-Balaka (Amnesty International 2013c, p.2). Indeed, Muslim refugee respondents claimed after the fact that ‘everyone was involved; everyone had guns; the police, the gendarmerie; they all joined in; they all became Anti-Balaka’ (3M,@teashop,Kentzou,Sept20). In this, they equally merged Christian civilians together with the anti-Balaka, a framing that equally ‘justified’ continued attacks against Christian civilians by the Séléka (Amnesty International 2014a, p.19; Bangura 2014a, p.2; ICC 2014a, p.27). Escalating ‘inter-communal distrust and hostility’ perpetuated further ‘tit-for-tat killings, vigilantism and mob violence’ (Amnesty International 2013c, p.7), all of which eventually ‘spiralled into sectarian violence against and between Muslim and Christian civilians’ (OHCHR 2014a; see also: FIDH 2014a, p.8; ICC 2014a, pp.20–21; Wood 2014).

Recalling the transformation of the ‘threatened’ into the ‘threatener’, analysts emphasised that ‘civilians were also found to have taken part in killings, mostly out of retaliation for the abuses they had endured’ (OHCHR 2014a; See also: Bangura 2014a,

¹²⁴ This recalls discussions from chapter two.

p.2; ICC 2014a, p.27). In this, the sense of 'moral entitlement' inherent to self-perceived victimhood allows the group at risk to use whatever means necessary to ensure its safety (Bar-Tal *et al.* 2009, p.254). Drawing on the status of 'innocence' and the presumed moral high ground implicit in victimhood, 'any attack conducted by the victim can be construed as self-defence and can therefore be justified, thereby legitimising violence carried out by the victim' (Smyth 2000, p.132). As such, self-perceived 'victims' are able to sidestep any sense of guilt for committing harmful acts against others (Ibid, p.253).

Importantly, these dynamics unfolded in that murky meso space. Being grounded in the micro level dynamics of what Kalyvas refers to as a 'black box of intracommunity dynamics and individual behavior' characterised by intimate and inter-personal hurt (2006, p.11), these dynamics nevertheless were intimately entwined with both the Séléka and the anti-Balaka as the parties to the conflict. Arguing that this 'Pandora's box' of micro level violence is militarily unrelated to the larger dynamics of the armed conflict within which it unfolds (2006, p.20), Kalyvas emphasises that the bottom-up drivers of violence are indeed distinctly different than the presumed top-down drivers (Ibid; Keen 1998, pp.45–46). But these two sets of dynamics eventually meet in the meso space.

Reflecting claims by Malešević that 'once unleashed, collective violence becomes its own master, operating on its own tracks and creating new social realities' (2010, p.84; see also: Arendt 2002, pp.19–20; Riches 1986b, p.10), Shy underlines that despite 'being unconnected to its causes', war itself is altered by such micro level violence, which takes on 'a life of its own' with people forgetting what it was originally about as they strive to survive in the face of persistent deadly threats (1976 cited in Kalyvas 2006, p.82).

Thus, even if the crisis was originally conceived as a means to a political end as suggested in both cases, the complex micro level reconfiguring often reduces violence to an end in itself (Besteman 2002, p.6; Keane 2003, p.150; Van Creveld cited in Besteman 2002, p.7; Kalyvas 2006, p.59). This is especially so in the case of revenge, which many acknowledge can 'quickly dominate motivations of violence' (Kalyvas 2006, p.59), supplanting the original political goals as the drivers of violence (Besteman 2002, p.9). Thus, building on Pupavac's claim that trauma is not just a consequence of war, but equally 'a cause of conflict' (2001, p.365), Fierke concludes that '[p]ractices of warfare reproduce human suffering, which becomes a factor in the reproduction of war itself' (2007, p.9). Thus the failure to deliver on the global promise of protection has wide reaching implications. Not only is the immediate human suffering increased, but these failures also equate with prolonging people's exposure to violence as armed conflict itself is perpetuated.

7.5 Conclusions

Do globally articulated protection norms make a difference in the lives of people who most need them to do so? This chapter shows not only that the global promise of protection is a failure in FPZs, but that these failures themselves have dramatic consequences. Although people at risk work hard to avoid and tolerate the consequences of exposure to on-going violence, a micro level analytic lens reveals that prolonged exposure to violence reconfigures people.

Within a profoundly threatening environment where protective options are unreliable or non-existent, people at risk inevitably perceive themselves as victims. However vis-à-vis the logic of auto-protection, they are nevertheless left with the responsibility to navigate the challenges they confront and keep themselves and those closest to them safe. In this, they look to a carefully delineated ‘solidarity group’. Quite the opposite to macro assumptions of people organizing according to the macro framing of ‘combatants’ and ‘non-combatants’, this micro level social re-organization rather falls along the lines of ‘us’ and ‘them’, with the fact of bearing arms being largely irrelevant. Importantly, those falling outside of one’s tightly delineated ‘solidarity group’, often including neighbours and even brothers, are excluded and typically reimagined as a threat.

Further, quite the opposite to the presumed primacy of top-down norms, *locally* articulated social norms play the dominant role in FPZs. With deeply personal losses and suffering weighing heavily, local norms are often adapted in a manner that progressively justifies offensive violence as an auto-protection mechanism. Further, as the power inequities vis-à-vis armed groups persist, this violence is reframed as revenge and justice, thus justifying the targeting of former neighbours and family members as newly defined enemies. However, within the logic of social norms around revenge, those targeted are of course then obliged to respond in kind, generating a rapidly escalating ‘tit-for-tat’ cycle of often largely civilian-on-civilian violence.

Given that much of these dynamics are invisible through a macro lens, they often go unnoticed by external observers. They are left to evolve in the micro space, gaining attention only at the point at which they overtake the broader dynamics of the conflict within which they are embedded. Thus, the perils of dismissing insight into these local dynamics and their potential for spurring, perpetuating and indeed reshaping the dynamics of an armed conflict have proven to be dramatic, severely compounding the protection complex.

CHAPTER 8 : Conclusions

'We must not forget how remarkably far we have come in so short a time'
(Ban Ki-moon 2012).

8.1 Introduction

Given claims that the ultimate objective of global protection norms is to prevent human suffering, it follows that lived experience should be the ultimate litmus test for such norms. Indeed, stepping off of Ban Ki-moon's enthusiastic claim that we have come far in terms of delivering on the global promise of protection, this thesis is located at the intersect between 'advancing norms' and an ever more precisely articulated promise of protection, and the lived experiences of 'worsening realities' as observed in FPZs. Using Central African Republic and South Sudan as examples of some of the worst protection crises in the world, it asks if globally articulated protection norms have actually made a concrete difference for people at imminent risk in these contexts.

The originality of this thesis stems from the extensive primary empirical research it presents, with the thesis aiming to be illustrative, interpretive, and explanatory. In taking the global protection vision as its starting point, it traces the global-to-local trajectories of ever advancing protection norms. In focusing on the nexus between the ideational and operational forms of protection it seeks to problematize the translation of ideas into concrete action.

What is revealed is that rather than clear top-down trajectories linking the macro ideational processes with the micro level lived realities, there are dramatic ruptures between the two perspectives. While protection is ultimately about the well-being of an individual at risk, the global protection regime relies almost singularly on macro level analysis – a perspective that systematically renders the individual invisible and dismisses violence as a natural consequence of armed conflict. In the absence of any real problematizing of the translation of ideational and aspirational protective norms, much of the global to local transmission is assumed away by the global protection regime. However, with the micro level realities remaining largely invisible in the global perspective, there is actually little correlation between macro level assumptions of how protection is expected to work and the concrete lived experiences of the politics of protection as they play out in the micro spaces of FPZs. As such, the preferential macro focus on the political elite, grand strategies, and formal processes which constitute a political *conflict crisis* opposed to the actual human suffering and the *protection crisis* that such hostilities generate produces fundamental analytic dysfunctions that prompt problematic responses.

This is especially so when considered in relation to the urgent and immediate need for protection that acutely charged and chaotic FPZs generate. Lofty ideals and aspirational processes will not protect individuals who are literally standing on the threshold of life and death, or staring down the barrel of a gun. Nor will aerial bombardment that engages with the political contestation but is utterly unaware of the lived experiences of a given crisis.

As such, when we look to the way forward, what is necessary is a more careful stitching together of these disparate perspectives. Insights gained through the meso lens that spotlights the interface between the macro and the micro dimensions must be animated in order to reconcile the sometimes dramatic disconnects. Moreover, rather than seeing protection as an exclusively top-down process, the protection construct should rather be conceptualised as a horizontal continuum along which the macro and the micro level realities influence one another as they interconnect in the meso space.

However, the meso perspective also sheds light on what Cohen refers to as ‘states of denial’ in which ‘people react as if they do not know what they know’ (2000, p.x). This is a dimension that enables the often dramatic disconnects between the macro and micro realities to persist. The obscuring of the micro perspective and the rendering of individuals invisible goes far in explaining how highly inadequate and ineffective protection responses are tolerated, despite the consequences of extreme human suffering. Describing a state in which ‘we know and don’t know at the same time’ (Ibid, p.5), Cohen notes ‘a tone of acceptance’ and thus a ‘normalization’ of the horrific realities in which ‘an unspoken collusion to ignore (or pretend to ignore?) the whole subject’ emerges (Ibid, p.xi). Outrage is thus moderated, if not supplanted with acceptance.

Nevertheless, the global protection regime is left to reconcile what is clearly a duplicitous position. It has to resolve the utter contradictions between the state-centric institutional-based vision of how protection is *supposed to function* with the collapse of state institutions that is essentially inherent to conflict zones. The call, seemingly by rote, by norm entrepreneurs to these ‘authorities’ to reinstate institutions and law and order – despite this having not existed even prior to the current crises is simply duplicitous.

Equally concerning is the fundamental paradox of the state which, being cast to play the role of primary protector, in both case studies more robustly engages with its role as primary perpetrator of violence. This has norm entrepreneurs reporting the on-going violations and abuses perpetrated by such actors, while simultaneously calling on these same abusers to assume their legally mandated protection role, as though simple reminders would prompt the urgently required change of behaviour, or even more

fundamentally, change of identity. Complex behaviour changes are expected to happen within the chaos and complexities of overt conflict crises.

Entailing a blatant denial of the facts, such protection efforts come off as little more than wishful thinking, and unsurprisingly generate little positive protective impact in micro spaces. However, they actually make a certain kind of sense when considered in relation to what Cohen calls 'implicatory denial' in which the facts and their implications are not denied, but rather the 'significance of implications' is (2000, p.8). Underlining that in such cases, 'knowledge itself is not at issue, but doing the 'right' thing with this knowledge' is (Ibid), Cohen's frame leaves us wondering if these discursive efforts, seemingly devoid of any feasibility of manifesting a concrete protective impact, rather serve the interests of the global community in that they provide a 'mechanism for coping with guilt, anxiety and other disturbing emotions' provoked by the realities of these crisis situations (Ibid). In this sense, the global protection regime is not in place to generate an actual protective impact for those at greatest risk, but is rather there to help us manage the 'suffering' we experience in knowing that such crises exist. Although this goes some way to explain the glaring paradoxes illustrated throughout this thesis, there are also more concrete factors at play.

One is ontological, concerning the question of what constitutes the fundamental building blocks of protection. The traditional macro perspective on how protection works presumes three central elements including: the perpetrator, the victim, and the bearer of the duty to protect.¹²⁵ Further, the roles of each of are seen as both fixed and clearly delineated. In fact, the highly influential principle of distinction perpetuates assumptions of an absolute dichotomy between the 'combatant' (or perpetrator) and the 'non-combatant' (or victim).

However, the micro level insights reveal just how erroneous such absolutes prove to be in reality, spotlighting the fluidity between these roles, illustrating that any one actor could potentially play one or all such roles. Indeed, the previous chapters have illustrated how protectors double as perpetrators; and victims double either as self-protectors or even perpetrators. In fact, while the global resilience agenda seeks to transform 'victims' into 'protectors', micro insights illustrate how such self-perceived victims are then prompted to reimagine some of their co-victims as 'others', framing them as a threat – and thus justifying their own transformation into a new form of perpetrator and indeed creating a new dimension of violence. In this, assumptions of fixed roles limit insight into the actual dynamics of violence as they unfold at the micro level.

¹²⁵ Often a fourth element is that of the 'observer'.

A dogged fixation on pre-established assumptions of how protection is meant to work enables the global protection regime to sustain a state of simply 'ignoring (or pretending to ignore?)' (Cohen 2000,pxi) the actual politics of protection as they unfold in the micro spaces of FPZs. Within this, efforts to trace the top-down trajectories of the globally articulated promise of protection reveals that while the global protection regime concentrates on constructing a careful state of denial within the global arena, the micro level politics of protection continue to unfold, often enough on the doorsteps of people at risk. However, despite being depicted as passive victims awaiting to be rescued, these actors are powerful agents who often seek to directly alter the local politics of protection. However, even these dynamics remain largely invisible – until they alter the macro dynamics of the broader armed conflict within which they are embedded. However, at this point, the protection complex has been rendered exponentially more complicated.

8.2 The Politics of Protection

From a top-down perspective, protection as law is the ultimate embodiment of these contradictions. Advocated as the most likely means of concretizing the global promise of protection, legal positivism is intimately tied to the functioning of state institutions. Assumptions that institutions function, and that individuals in need can indeed access and make use of such institutions, sit in dramatic contradiction with the realities of FPZs where such institutions are typically extremely weak. This is exacerbated as contexts become more dangerous, with such institutions often being pushed into complete collapse. Thus while protection as law continues to be proposed as one of the most likely means through which the global promise of protection is likely to be delivered, this is actually feasible in those places where the essential institutions exist and function, which are equally those places where the promise of protection is less urgently needed. In FPZs, the idea of protection by law proves to be little more than wishful thinking.

Those tasked with operationalising protection in FPZs often thus reduce the idea to that of shielding or protecting those at risk from imminent danger. In fact, especially in the case of acutely violent contexts, this reduction is almost intuitive, with the emphasis on physical security typically emerging as the most immediate priority. Thus, protection conjures up the notion that protection actors can generate some kind of buffer between the person at risk and the source of threat. This is normally the responsibility of state-mandated security sector actors. However, as indicated above, the best-case scenario in FPZs, is that such actors and their institutions have simply collapsed. In the worst cases, they morph into primary perpetrators of violence against citizens at risk.

This obviously causes dramatic complications in efforts to translate the global promise of protection, not the least of which stem from assumptions that the state bears the fixed role of protector – this prevents full acceptance of the fact that the state is simultaneously the primary perpetrator. Such contradictory realities are ignored, or at least held as two separate realities that bear no relationship to each other, with the global protection regime again stubbornly reacting ‘as if they do not know what they know’ (Cohen 2000, p.x). Indeed, CAR provides a fairly dramatic example of just how problematic this can be, with the Séléka, as *de facto* ‘authorities’ being called upon by norm entrepreneurs to ‘restore’ state institutions. Quickly insinuating themselves into formal state institutions, armed Séléka elements were thus even better positioned to carry out their personalised extortion and harassment activities. Rather than providing even negligible protection, this generated new and enhanced forms of acute threat for the civilian population.

Alternatively, if this conundrum is acknowledged, the global protection regime increasingly looks to external solutions, as is now encouraged through constructs such as the International Criminal Court, as well as the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ doctrine, in which the international responsibility to respond on behalf of people in dire circumstances has been clearly articulated. In contrast to complex and all-encompassing promise of protection as articulated by law, this more contemporary promise of protection is reduced to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, which are referred to as ‘the most egregious crimes’ (UN General Assembly 2005, para.139). This minimalist approach considers only physical security, and is thus expected to be operationalised by UN military peacekeepers.

Nevertheless, even this mono-dimensional promise has proven to be extremely difficult to deliver. In CAR, many respondents saw especially the regional troops of these international forces playing a direct role in perpetuating the on-going violence. In South Sudan, although multiple safe-zones emerged as a result of civilians at risk having forced their way onto UNMISS compounds, even some of these safe-zones were breached by armed belligerents. As such, beyond the fact that only a very small portion of the at-risk population actually had access to these safe-zones, at least some of those who did, actually had little confidence in the protection UNMISS could provide.

As such, revealing a desperate search for any form of protection, many people at risk rather focused their hopes for protection on INGOs. However, being at least equally vulnerable to the local dynamics violence, and relying upon non-coercive means, INGOs are profoundly constrained in such circumstances and are thus a highly unlikely and

unreliable source of physical protection. As such, the failure of these top-down efforts to translate the global promise of protection reveals an extremely limited capacity of protection actors to deliver concrete protection.

However, rather than acknowledging the extent to which globally articulated protection norms actually fail to penetrate into these micro spaces, the protection equation itself is repeatedly adapted. These conceptual adaptations are particularly visible through a meso lens which reveals intricate mental gymnastics that are employed to reconcile this tension on a conceptual level. The result is an ever evolving justification for operational approaches that commit to delivering on ever smaller portions of the global promise to protect.

8.3 Meso Space – Reinventing the Promise

The previous chapters have demonstrated that while normative evolution continues to expand and ever more precisely articulate the global promise of protection, in contrast, progressively more narrow articulations of this promise are actually being operationalised. This is illustrated through the layout of the chapters of this thesis which demonstrate that the relatively broader aching promise articulated in law is narrowed to the promise of physical security, which is itself, further narrowed to the humanitarian imperative and the promised intent to save lives and alleviate suffering. Operationally, this is all too often reduced to a far softer promise of solidarity and response after the fact. While these efforts consistently fail to deliver on the fundamental promise of protection, this perpetual re-articulation of the notion serves to disguise the translation failures.

In fact, these perpetual re-articulations of approaches to protection emerge as a yet another disguise for the utter protection failures that come before it. As one operational framing of the promise is exposed as being infeasible, the next ever more reduced framing emerges, generating a progression of ever more curtailed promises. For example, acknowledging that legal positivism has little capacity to deliver a concrete protective impact directly within FPZs, some legal analysts nevertheless suggest reframing protection as the fight against impunity – as a means of pursuing legal justice after the fact. However, as a *post hoc* intervention, this approach implicitly accepts that immediate protection failures are inevitable. While emphasising claims of a future deterrent effect, it in the meantime leaves those who are facing immediate risk fully exposed. Its protection offerings are relevant only after these protection failures have occurred. While the potential for future deterrence actually bears little relevance for those who face immediate deadly

risk, the holding the perpetrators to account for their crimes actually reduces the protection promise to that of helping people to come to terms with their losses.

As indicated above, another reframing of the global protection promise is that associated with R2P, and its promise to protect against the most egregious cases of abuses. This doctrine is again constructed on the assumption (if not assertion) that a broader promise of protection is going to fail; and this in itself justifies focusing protective efforts on a profoundly narrowed promise. Essentially, the message is that the international community will not tolerate the most 'egregious abuses', however all other protection failures are, by comparison, relatively tolerable.

Further, with the peacekeeping being tied to R2P as its operational manifestation, the notion of protection is inevitably reduced to that of physical security. However, with chapter four sketching the challenges of even this, those on ground took the liberty to further narrow the operational promise, with peacekeepers simply focusing on only a portion of their operational PoC mandate. UNMISS peacekeepers largely reduced their protection effort to that of physical protection of individuals within the UNMISS compounds. However, again, even in this dramatically reduced form, the protection provided was unreliable.

It is from within this quagmire that INGOs emerge as unlikely protectors. Although many humanitarian actors claim to adopt a rights-based approach – thus giving a strong indication that they seek to translate globally articulated protection norms – their capacity to do so in FPZs is deeply constrained by the context. While the INGO protection effort typically falls dramatically short of translating global protection norms into a concrete protective impact in such contexts, they argue that they respond more directly to the moral imperative embodied in human rights. Indeed, in acutely violent contexts, they point to the 'humanitarian imperative' as the driver of their response. This imperative reflects an even more dramatic narrowing of the promise to what is essentially a commitment to respond; while the promise of protection is reduced to that of saving lives and alleviating suffering. Operationally though, such efforts are typically reduced to little more than solidarity. However, according to protection reframed as a humanitarian imperative, simply acting, in essentially any manner, in the face of inhumanity emerges as the important protection achievement – at least in the eyes of the humanitarian actors themselves.

However, the relatively newly emergent resilience agenda takes this process of 're-inventing protection' to a whole new level, as explored in the following sub-section.

8.3.1 Transferring the Responsibility to Protect

Persistent failures of the top-down vision of how protection works have spurred enthusiasm within the global protection regime for the so-called 'resilience agenda' and so-called auto-protection as a seemingly viable protection option – despite the fact that this articulation of protection actually has no relationship with the globally articulated promise of protection.

Despite the power inequities that characterise the lived experiences of violence in FPZs, people are increasingly expected to manage their protection needs independently. While these people are acknowledged as being stripped back to what Agamben refers to as 'bare life' (1998, p.12), protection in this sense is redefined as 'resilience' – which in fact often actually reflects little more than the bare will to survive. While particularly humanitarian protection programmes are often designed to support such efforts, this essentially reduces the global protection effort to supporting people to do what they would have done for themselves. Moreover, given INGOs are forced to flee in the most critical of protection crises, even this limited support is removed and people at risk are left on their own to bear the full responsibility to protect themselves in the most dire circumstances.

This transfer of responsibilities has two important implications. The first is that it provides a justification for those who bear moral and/or legal obligations to protect, to abdicate these responsibilities. Further, while it places ever more strain on those who are at the greatest risk, this transfer of responsibility may well provoke the prospect of people at risk resorting to offensive violence as a means of auto-protection, which in such circumstances is reframed as justice and revenge in the eyes of self-perceived victims.

Perpetual exposure to deadly violence unsurprisingly alters people. In the face of deeply personalised experiences of violence and indeed protection failures, individuals are pushed beyond the limits of what they can tolerate. As the primary targets of on-going armed violence, people struggle to make sense of their profoundly hostile circumstances.

Local socially constructed norms that would normally constraint violent behaviour are often modified to condone, and even promote aggressive violence. Defensive auto-protection mechanisms often transform into offensive action aimed at reaping justice and revenge. This offensive violence is all too often targeted at former neighbours and friends, who within this context of imminent risk are quickly reconceived as the 'antagonistic other', thus being reimagined as posing a 'threat' and indeed being an 'enemy'; and thus a 'legitimate' target against which the self-perceived victim can direct their offensive violence.

Indeed, one of the most tragic consequences of global protection failures is this co-victimisation, in which those who have been most hurt turn their anger on others who have also suffered all too similar hurt.

8.4 The Myth of the Protection Promise

When reading through the previous chapters, one might think that my analysis is harsh and all too pessimistic. One might even argue that my research reveals some concrete protection impacts that reflect important innovations and even protection successes in these extremely difficult circumstances. And through another framing, I would agree. But the challenge that this thesis explores is intentionally stark. It proposed to examine the *concrete* delivery of the *global protection promise* into the lives of people facing some of the harshest protection crises imaginable. The above sketches a succession of progressively re-articulations of protection. From the global perspective, this reflects the on-going denial, and indeed perpetual justification for continual protection failures.

From the micro perspective, respondents grapple with the incongruence between the promises made and their lived realities. In this, many concluded that at best human rights could not apply to their given circumstances because of the chaos. Although some suggested that they might apply once peace returns, others concluded more profoundly that human rights simply do not apply to them. Seeing themselves as excluded from the 'universal' frame, their expectations are quite the opposite of a comprehensive promise of protection. When measured against a total absence of protection, and indeed a near absence of expectations of the same, even partial successes are taken to be enormously important. Even the most negligible protection impact is often defined as extremely significant. For example, although INGO protection efforts often reduce to 'solidarity' and were described by some respondents as a 'good-will gesture', many nevertheless expressed significant appreciation for this. Thus, the positive emotional impact of such 'goodwill gestures' are not to be simply dismissed.

Indeed, while the operationalization has proven to be partial at best when contrasted with the global promise of protection, which is presented as universal and comprehensive, the relevance of an impact in an individual's life is subjective and relative. This was particularly evident in the claims of the women who had been able to reach the UNMISS PoC-site in Bentiu. After having been utterly exhausted due to being relentlessly pursued in the bush by armed actors, and although they continued to face life threatening

challenges in the UNMISS site, these women were visibly relieved to receive the partial protection the site provided.

Although the grand promise of comprehensive protection remains unattainable, the fact that the UNMISS PoC-site prevented armed actors from relentlessly pursuing them, constituted a dramatic protection impact for these women. Similarly, as much as people appreciated the fact that INGO staff made the effort to come and hear about their experiences, this 'goodwill gesture' does not equate with the translation of the promise of protection that is embodied in globally articulated norms. However, being often unaware, and almost always unconvinced by this aspirational promise, those at risk contrast results against the worst case scenario. In this view, the metric for success is reduced, with people appreciating even the smallest indication of such a promise.

As a long-time humanitarian protection actor, I have myself engaged in a number of the activities that I have critiqued in this research. I myself have argued at other times that even if humanitarian action is an inadequate alternative to state protection, because we can do something, even if this something is dramatically less than the global promise of protection, we must do it. And even after this research experience, I expect that I will continue to make the same argument as a practitioner.

Thus, it is not my intention to undermine what have often been brave and determined efforts by my protection colleagues who have tried to operationalise the global promise of protection in the nearly impossible operational realities of "fragile protection zones". This work rather aimed at providing an unambiguous assessment of where we are in terms of delivering on the global promise of protection.

As such, this work has determinedly held the globally articulated promise against the starkest acid test: that of delivering a comprehensive concrete impact in the lives of people who are at grave risk in some of the worst crisis situations in the world. Although the results are indeed rather bleak, a glimpse into the stark realities of the lived experiences of individuals exposed to on-going violence illustrates the brutal implications of protection failures. It is hoped that this in itself can take some strides in shaking up the self-serving 'states of denial'.

ANNEX

Interview Themes

The following is an outline of the themes that guided the interviews conducted in order to gather the empirical data for this thesis

1. What is the general situation?

This allowed for respondents to set the tone of the interview and flag some of the issues that were most important for them. This also constructed a general impression of how people interpreted their context and were making sense of the violence around them.

2. What constitutes violence?

What are the types of violence that people confront in this area; what is the purpose and the causes and consequences of this violence; how prevalent are the various types of violence; who generates what type of violence; for what reason; under what authority; with what guidance; to what extent do perpetrators restrain their use of violence; when; why; do trends of violence vary; how; why; etc

3. What constitutes threat & what are priority concerns?

People often expressed far wider concerns that exposure to violence, thus I systematically explored what they deemed to constitute the greatest and most worrying threats; what they believe to be the primary sources of these threats; why; how durable they expected these threats to be; what their consequences might be into the future; if they saw any newly emerging threats; by whom; in what form; why; why now; etc.

4. Perceptions of Vulnerability – who thinks who is at greatest risk and why?

Who is most susceptible to the threats identified above; why; what are the contributing factors that make someone particularly vulnerable; who is most/least susceptible to threats; why; who might be specifically targeted by perpetrators of violence; why; etc

5. What constitutes security, protection, & justice mechanisms?

What facets of the security apparatus exist, what used to exist; what functions, for whom, in what circumstances; who uses them; when; why; what are the informal alternatives; who uses these; when; what system do people most trust; why; do they work; to what end; etc

6. Protection & Human Rights as a notion – how is it conceptualised; expectations?

What does protection mean; what are 'human rights'; how do people understand the differences between these terms; what terms do they use locally; have you heard of either; what are the distinctions between human rights, protection, security, peace, justice; etc

7. What do you think protection should look like?

what would an effective response to your priority protection concerns look like; what should it achieve; what do you think the basis for it is (law, morality, culture, religion, etc); who should do it; why; when; how; who promises to do it; who do you expect to do it; etc

8. What is protection as an experience – what is it in real terms?

What does protection actually look like in this context; what does it concretely consist of; what do you think its objectives are; what does it achieve; who actually does it; why; how; when; for whom; who benefits; why; according to whom; who is excluded; why; who decides; etc

9. Responsibilities for protection – who bears what duties?

Who do you think is responsible to protect; on what basis; who are they responsible to protect; how; why; how are they held responsible; is there a distinction between formal and informal responsibilities; in what form; to whom; why; when; to what extent is this achieved; should this change; do those responsible succeed to protect; why/why not; how; etc

10. What happens in a protection deficit – when all else fails?

What do people do when all systems they would normally rely upon and all promises for security & protection fail them; who relies on whom, why, for what; who helps whom, why, how, for what reason, at what price; at what debt; how is it paid; who is left alone; why, what do they do; etc

Primary Source Empirical Data

Overview of Interviews Conducted

South Sudan Interviews (July 16, 2012 - October 15, 2012)											
Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	UN/INGO	NNGO / Nat Staff	Elders	Officials	Civilians	Religious Leaders
Juba	Various	25	33	25	8	9	2	1	13	8	0
Bentiu/Pariang	04-18.08.12	39	109	69	40	3	7	7	34	57	1
Torit/Kapoeta	21-29.08.12	26	45	33	12	1	9	4	4	21	3
Wau/Raja	04-14.09.12	25	47	35	12	3	8	12	13	10	1
Rumbek	19-27.09.12	28	91	53	38	1	6	18	2	61	3
Bor	05-10.10.12	27	93	26	67	4	4	0	4	81	0
	Totals	170	418	241	177	30	36	43	70	238	8
Central African Republic Interviews (November 20, 2012 - March 24, 2013)											
Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NNGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders
Bangui	various	11	64	34	30	0	0	0	18	46	0
Boguilu	26.11-13.12	69	114	63	51	8	10	77	8	1	9
Zemio	17.12-16.01	114	247	120	127	22	15	185	14	3	8
Mboki	17- 22.01	25	43	16	27	1	5	33	3	0	1
Batangafou	1-4.02 & 18-28.02	51	148	76	72	21	4	100	7	16	0
Kabo	04-15.02.13	54	118	68	50	25	7	48	18	15	5
Ndele	08 - 19.03.13	54	157	67	90	8	4	101	36	5	3
	Totals	378	891	444	447	85	45	544	104	87	26
Central African Republic - Bangui (July 19 2013 - September 05, 2013)											
Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple Interviewed	Male	Female	UN/INGO	NNGO / Nat Staff	Officials	Community Leader	Civilians	Religious Leaders
Bangui	19.07 - 05.09	131	328	136	192	37	25	5	35	222	4
Central African Republic - East Cameroon (September 10, 2014 - September 25, 2014)											
Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple Interviewed	Male	Female	UN/INGO	NNGO / Nat Staff	Officials	Community Leader	Civilians	Religious Leaders
Bangui	Sept 5-9	5	11	2	9	5	0	0	1	5	0
Carnot	Sept 10-12	8	13	11	2	2	3	6	0	0	2
Berberati	Sep-12	1	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Kentzou	Sept 12, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22	27	75	55	20	4	6	2	1	60	2
Lolo	Sept 13 & 15	15	78	57	21	2	1	0	21	54	0
Mbili	Sept 16, 18, 19	20	60	42	18	2	2	0	25	31	0
	Totals	76	240	170	70	15	15	8	48	150	4
South Sudan Interviews (October 14, 2014 - December 17, 2014)											
Date	Location	Total Interviews	Total ppl Interviewed	Male	Female	UN/INGO	NNGO / Nat Staff	Officials	Community Leaders	Civilians	Religious Leaders
Juba	Various	30	40	15	25	22	4	0	8	5	1
Leer	Oct 22-25	19	36	20	16	3	1	3	2	25	2
Rumbek	Nov 03-05	16	88	30	58	1	1	0	0	86	0
Ganyliel	Nov 06-13	41	99	31	68	4	0	2	9	84	0
Bentiu	Nov 21-28	43	87	31	56	5	0	7	0	76	0
Koch	Dec 03-10	52	132	91	41	11	0	28	0	93	0
Bor	Dec 13-16	17	31	18	13	0	0	0	3	28	0
	TOTALS	218	513	236	277	46	6	40	22	397	3

South Sudan – Interview Details

Interviews in Juba South Sudan July 20 - August 03, 2012

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leader	Comments
Juba	7.20.2012	2	2	2		2						Jongelie Commissioners in Pact W/S
	7.23.2012	3	3	2	1			1	2			SSLS; 2X NPA
	7.24.2012	4	4	3	1		2		2			2XPact; Min of Mines; 2X Eyat
	7.25.2012	2	4	3	1	4						2X min of Ag; 2X min of Mines
	7.26.2012	2	2	2		2						1X Min of Ag; 1 MP (com on land, mines, enviro
	7.27.2012	2	2	1	1				2			ICRC HoM, ICRC Prot Coord
Boungoo	7.31.2012	2	5	4	1	1	4					Deputy Chief, youth gold panners, restaurateur
Juba	8.1.2012	3	5	4	1	4		1				2X Min of Mines, 2X Min of Dev (Cen Equat), Livia
	8.2.2012	2	2	2		1			1			1X CRS, 1X Minof Mines (Cen Equatoria)
	8.3.2012	3	4	2	2		2		2			2X Oxfam, 2X civilians
Totals		25	33	25	8	1	13	8	2	9	0	
Percentage				76%	24%	3%	39%	24%	3%	27%	0%	

Interviews in Bentiu & Pariang in South Sudan 05 - 18 August, 2012

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Bentiu	8.5.2012	5	17	7	10		17					Civilian house-house
	8.6.2012		6	6		2	2	1	1			1X UNMISS, 2 youth, Dpty Gov, Min of Ag, Concordis
	8.7.2012		13	12	1	6	5	1		1		2X Gov, 1 Peace Com, 1 Min of Envir, 5 civ, 1 Priest
Pariang	8.9.2012	4	12	8	4	5	2	4	1			Dpt Com, Police Com, Refugees, INGO
	8.10.2012	4	8	7	1	2	6					3 house-house, 1Head of Traditional Court
	8.11.2012	5	13	10	3	4	7					4X CID Police; 1X Elder on Appeal Court; 8 civ
	8.12.2012	6	14		14		14					Refugee girl students from Nuba Mts
	8.13.2012	6	14	9	5	10	3	1				1X nat staff of INGO (NVP); 3 women wildlife guards; 2 SPLA in street; 5 SPLA Authorities (Commander) in Barracks, 2X civilians
Bentiu	8.14.2012	1	1	1		1						Peter Guy Commissioner Panjiajar Unity State
Rubkona	8.15.2012	4	6	4	2	3	3					2XSPLA in street, 1 Elder, 2 women judges of trad court
Bentiu	8.16.2012	3	4	4		3			1			UNMISS, Minof Ag, Relief&Rehab Comm
	8.18.2012	1	1	1			1					Directorof EquatorGold
Totals		39	109	69	40	7	34	57	7	3	1	
Percentage				63%	37%	6%	31%	52%	6%	3%	1%	

Interviews in Torit & Kapoeta in South Sudan 21-29 August, 2012

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Torit	21.08.2012	1	1	1					1			UNMISS Civil Affairs Torit (drive Juba - Torit)
	22.08.2012	1	3	2	1					3		Dieses of Torit (President arrives in Torit)
Kapoeta	23.08.2012	1	1	1				1				CBO Kaopeat (drove Torit - Kapoeta)
	24.08.2012	8	11	7	4	4	6	1				meet Head Chief, visit panning area, UnMISS, Elders (tried to go to Napordit, rained out), 1 village int, 1 CBO, 1 Woman's association
	25.08.2012	4	7	5	2	2	2	3				1 gold buyer, 2 woman, 1 policeman, 7 cattle traders
	26.08.2012	5	11	9	2	1	9	1				2 Jie youth with CBO to develop concept on how they can be helped; tried to travel to Napaetite
	27.08.2012	1	6	4	2		4	2				Kapoeta Executive Director (nothing); Kaopeta Commissioner
Kapoeta	28.08.2012	2	2	2		2						Deputy Speaker Torit; Min of Investment & Mines (acting); not able to find anyone for Min of Environment
Torit	28.08.2012	2	2	2		2						Chairlady of Woman's Association Kapoeta
	29.08.2012	1	1		1			1				
Totals		26	45	33	12	4	4	21	9	1	3	
Percentage				73%	27%	9%	9%	47%	20%	2%	7%	

Interviews in Wau & Raja in South Sudan 05 - 13 September, 2012

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Wau	05.09.2012	3	4	1	3	1		3				Min of Ag; Women's training and promotion group; Women's Development Group
	06.09.2012	4	5	5		1	1	1	2			Min of Mines 1 man; UNMISS x 2 civl affairs men; 1 very old Chief; 1 INGO Nat staff
	07.09.2012	3	13	11	2	7	1	4	1			Baggari (1 chiefs son, 1 police, 2 men, 1 woman); traditional court (7 Elders, 1 Woman Chief) - all near Wau
Khorhaja	08.09.2012	1	1	1		1						Policeman on the road on the way Wau-Raja
Raja	09.09.2012	2	2	2		2						ExecDir/Actng Commissioner; Director of Payams
	10.09.2012	3	8	2	6	5		3				SSRRC Directir; 3women @ woman's association; 3 women @ Woman's league (part of SPLM, 25%); 1 INGO nat staff
	11.09.2012	5	8	7	1	2	5		1			Raja Chief X2; Demjelab Chief X1; 3 IDPs; 1 woman; 1 UNMISS
Demzubeer	12.09.2012	1	3	3		1	2					1 discussion along the way with sub-chief, police com, police
Wau & area	13.09.2012	3	3	3		1	1			1		1X Bishop Diones of Wau; 1 rural Chief; 1 rural civilian farmer
Totals		25	47	35	12	12	13	10	8	3	1	
Percentage				74%	26%	26%	28%	21%	17%	6%	2%	

Interviews in Rumbek in South Sudan 20 - 27 September

Location	Date											Comments
		TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders	
Rumbek	20.09.2012	5	19	9	10		19					civilians in their compounds
	21.09.2012	7	30	12	18		1	29				civilians in their compounds (men drink @ 10 AM)
	24.09.2012	6	15	9	6	5		7	2	1		2INGO nat staff; 5 ladies in their compoind; 1 youth teacher; 1 youth teacher; 5 Elders traditional court; 1 UNMISS Civil Affairs
	25.09.2012	4	11	11		6		3	2			Traditional 'Special Court' X6 Elders; IRC Nation Prot; 2 Pact staff; 2 youth group
	26.09.2012	5	13	12	1	7	1	3	2			X3 civilians from Mayom Payam; 1Xwomens' group; 1X Save the Children; 1X Atg DG Ministry Social Development;X7 Rumbek North Trad Court
	27.09.2012	1	3		3						3	X3 Dioses of Rumbek 'Voice of women for peace'
Totals		28	91	53	38	18	2	61	6	1	3	
Percentage		58%	42%	20%	2%	67%	7%	1%	3%			

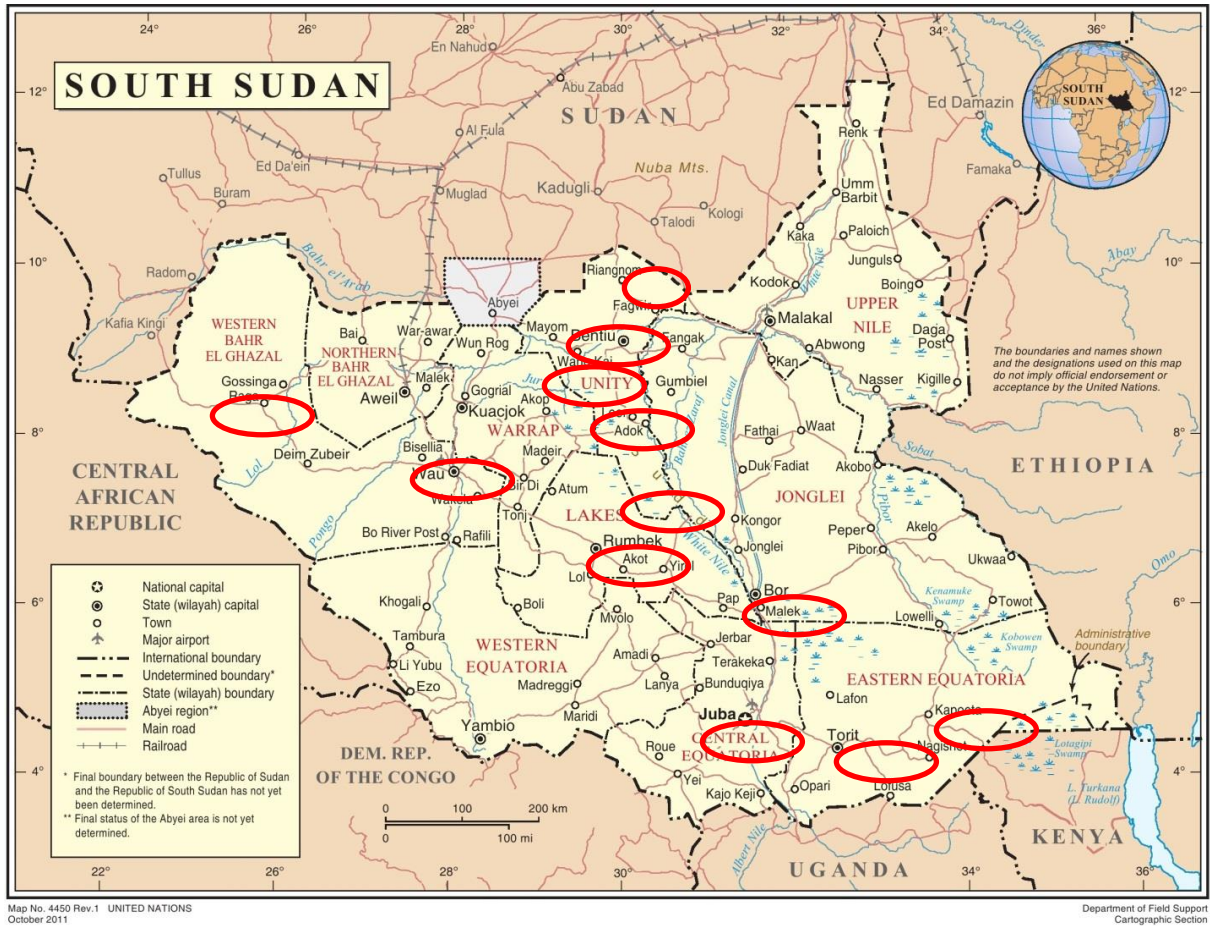
Interviews in Bor in South Sudan 05 - 09 October

Location	Date											Comments
		TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leader	
Bor	05.10.12	4	17	13	4		2	15				hh 6 men + 3 women; 2X SSRRC; 1 woman; 2 men + 3 very old men
	06.10.12	8	19	2	17		1	18				5 X iterviews @ hh; 1 old man police @ hh; 1old lady @hh; 3 shilook IDPs on their way to Pibor to join SPLA husbands
	07.10.12	4	28	4	24			27	1			1 X 23 people after church; 2 X 2 @ hhs (Sunday)
	08.10.12	8	23	2	21			21	2			6Xhh interviews of women; 1 head of Youth; 1 CBO
	09.10.12	3	6	5	1		1		1	4		1 Natstaff INGO; 1 coordinator Peace Commis'n Goss; 4XUNMISS
Totals		27	93	26	67	0	4	81	4	4	0	
Percentage		28%	72%	0%	4%	87%	4%	4%	0%			

South Sudan Interviews (October 14, 2014 - December 17, 2014)													
Date	Location	Total Interviews	Total ppl interviewed	Male	Female	UN/NGO	NGO	Authorities	Community Leaders	Civilians	Religious Leaders	Comments	
14-Oct-14	Juba	1										Prot cluster meeting	
16-Oct-14	Juba	4	4	1	3	4	0					NRC; UNHCR Shobha; DRC Consultant; NP	
17-Oct-14	Juba	2	2	0	2	2	0					UNHCR Maria; ACF CCM	
20-Oct-14	Juba	2	2	0	2	2	0					IRC Kiryn; WFP Marika	
21-Oct-14	Juba	1	1	0	1	1	0					IRC Severine	
22-Oct-14	Rumbek	1	5	5	0	0	0			5		5M young men sitting at airstrip in Rmbek	
22-Oct-14	Leer	2	4	2	2	2	0				2	2F ICRC; 2M Camboni Brothers	
23-Oct-14	Leer	8	13	6	7	1	0	3		9		1M UNHCR; 3M SSRA; 1M local @ comp; 2F to Gado; 1F old w 5 kids; 3F for distrib; 1F husb soldier in Malak; 1M MSF; 1M on comp	
24-Oct-14	Leer	6	15	12	3	0	1		2	12		1M RCDI; 1M old & blind; 2M Elders; 3F Nhialdiu; 1M teacher; 1F husb w MSF Unmiss Bentiu; 7M youth in en	
25-Oct-14	Leer	3	4	0	4	0	0			4		2F with olg guy; 1F good en; 1F trans	
27-Oct	Juba	1	1		1	1	0					1F, ICRC protection	
28-Oct	Juba PoC 3	3	5	4	1		0		3	1	1	PoC3 = 3M com leaders; 1M pastor; 1F new arrival from Uganda	
30-Oct	Juba PoC3	5	9	5	4		0		3	4		PoC3 = 2F @ market; 2M boys; 2M youth leaders; 2 women leader; 1M block leader	
31-Oct	Juba	5	6	2	4	4	2					1M concordis; 1F movement study; 1 M IOM; 2F Nile Hope; 1F UNHCR	
02-Nov	Juba	1	2		2	2	0					2F FAO	
03-Nov	Rumbek	4	19	1	18	1	1			17		1M @ IRC; 1F @ IRC; 3F lady in yellow; 14F IDPs open space	
04-Nov	Rumbek	5	31	13	18					31		13F airstrip; 8M&2F cattle keeper youth guy; 1M amok-ping; 2M&3F; IDPs dad looking after baby girl; 2M educated	
05-Nov	Rumbek	6	33	11	22					31		7M wedding; 2M&4F curious kid; 6F malaria kid; 2M&4F Arabic lady; 4F widows; 4F stitching	
06-Nov	Rum-Gan											Travel	
06-Nov	Ganyliel	2	3	3		1	2					IRC briefing; Ganyliel Commissioner	
07-Nov	Ganyliel	9	12	6	6			3		9		1F IDP; 1F IDP beaten; 1F elder IDP; 1F young married; 1M trans; 1M head of county crt; 1M payamcrt; 1M ganyliel crt; 2M&1F with baby refusing	
08-Nov	Ganyliel	6	14	2	12					14		2F from amonk-ping; 1F from Leer; 2Myouth from Bent; 4F from Bent in balnket tent; 3F from Bor; 2F from Malakal	
09-Nov	Ganyliel	2	2		2							1F Bentiu to Leer; 1F Bent Nurse	
10-Nov	Sanu (Gan)	7	24	6	18	1			4	19		1M trans; 4M admin; 2F IDPs calm mint; 3F locals pumpkin; 6F IDPs stealing pen; 2F pretty lady eng; 3&1M from Bor in Ganyliel	
11-Nov	Tayer (Gan)	5	13	7	6	1			2	10		1M trans; 2M Administration Tayer; 4M Dinka traders; 5F new arrival IDPs from Juba; 1 F trader from Ganyliel	
12-Nov	Ganyliel	7	20	4	16	1				16		1M trans; 2F confused who was IDP; 6F hygiene promoters; 2M elder calm; 2F young from Bentiu; 6F doing air; 1M&1F elder gy speaking Eng	
13-Nov	Gan-Juba	3	10	3	7					9		3M teachers; 1F Renk IDP; 6F IDPs in school	
21-Nov	Juba-Bentiu	1	1	1		1						UNHCR	
22-Nov	Bentiu	4	14	3	11		3			6			
23-Nov	Bentiu-PoC4	5	17	4	13					17			
24-Nov	Bentiu PoC3	5	8	1	7	2	1			5			
25-Nov	Bentiu-PoC2	9	20	10	10					20			
26-Nov	Bentiu-PoC5	8	12	5	7		1			11			
27-Nov	Bentiu-PoC1	9	13	6	7		2			11			
28-Nov	Bentiu-Juba	2	2	1	1	2	0			0			

Interviews in South Sudan October 14, 2014 - December 17, 2014 (Continued)												
Date	Location	Total Interviews	Total ppl interviewed	Male	Female	UN/NGO	NGO	Authorities	Community Leaders	Civilians	Religious Leaders	Comments
Juba-Koch	03-Dec	2	5	5	0	2		3		0		2M IRC Protection; 3M, SRRA coordination
Koch	04-Dec	10	34	34	0	2		12		20		1M, IRC context; 1M, IRC programming; 3M SSRA; 7M, Commissioner; 2M, security; 1M, trans; 5M, elder ones in Market; 1M, speaking English; 7M youth in market; 2m reflections
Koch	05-Dec	8	14	5	9					14		1F translator; 1F sis killed; 3M&1F, building house; 1M71F sophisticated man; 2F inside eating; 1F elderly active; 1M&2F brewing;
Koch	06-Dec	8	18	3	15					18		3F inside sound of dog; 1F her mother; 3F old com house; 2F co-wives; 1F infected foot; 3F fiends; 1F chef dead; 1M&1F bor&sis;
Koch	07-Dec	2	2	2		2						1M nat staff; 1M nat staff
Koch	08-Dec	8	25	16	9			4		21		1M nat staff; 1M trans; 2F&2M in tea shop; 1M soldier; 3M from Bentiu; 4M authorities; 3F friends; 2M&2F too many kids
Koch	09-Dec	9	25	17	8	2		4		19		3F harassed; 2F rest soldiers; 2F refused; 1F nakur; 2M Bwau; 8M cows; 4M court; 2M INGO; 1M trans
Koch-Juba	10-Dec	5	9	9	0	3		5	0	1		1M trans; 1M NP; 1M irc; 1m irc; 5M authorities
Juba	11-Dec	3	4	2	2	4						2M IOM; 2F prot
Juba-Bor	12-Dec											Travel
Bor	13-Dec	9	9	4	5				3	6		1M trans; 1M Chief; 1M justice; 1M Leer; 1F young; 1F Red Dress; 1F abit mad; 1F chairlady; 1F wobbly baby
Bor	14-Dec	8	22	14	8					22		6M @roundtable; 2M elder; 3M younger; 2F quiet restau; 2F orange pop; 1F&1M ethios; 3F pipes
Bor-Juba	15-Dec											Government shut down
Juba	16-Dec	2	4	1	3	2	2					Debrief NRC/prot; IOM; USAID
Totals		218	513	236	277	46	6	40	22	397	3	
Percentage		46%	54%	9%	1%	8%	4%	77%	1%			

South Sudan Map – Showing Interview Locations



Central African Republic – Interview Details

Interviews in Bangui in Central African Republic 21 November, 2012 - 20 March, 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Ppl	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	INGO / UN	Religious Leaders	Comments
Bangui	21.11.12	1	3		3				3			MSF HoM, AmHR visitor, HAO
	22.11.12	1	1	1					1			HoM DRC re protection programming
	21.01.13	1	1		1				1			HoM MSF
	29.01.13	1	8	6	2				8			DRC Team meeting
	31.01.13	1	1	1				1				DRC HoO Buka
	01.03.13	1	1	1					1			1M DRC HoM
	04.03.13	1	8	3	5				8			DRC Day long Prot meeting
	05.03.13	1	9	4	5				9			DRC internal day long protection strategy meeting
	19.03.13	1	6	3	3				6			DRC internal security management meeting
	20.03.13	1	20	12	8			17	3			DRC internal security management meeting with nat staff
	20.03.13	1	6	3	3				6			internal security management meeting
Totals		11	64	34	30	0	0	0	18	46	0	
		Percentage		53%	47%	0%	0%	0%	28%	72%	0%	

Interviews in Boguila in Central African Republic 28 November - 11 December, 2012

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Ppl	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN/INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Boguila	Nov-28	3	3	2	1	1		1		1		MSF PC; Local advisor; translator
	Nov-29	6	10	7	3	1		8		1		1F youth student; 1 Pator lady & son; 1 chef de village & assistant; 1M educated with malaria; 1M/1F motivated fam with herb table; 2M tlking about jobs
Bonasse	Nov-30	4	8	7	1	1	1	5		1		1M chef de vill & 1M church; 1M Ch d Gro Sec & 2M civi 2M demob; 1F civi not able to speak
Boguila	Nov-30	4	10	7	3			6	2		2	2M religious; 2M MSF nurses in vehicle; 1M & 3F local no vulnerability; 2M father&son
Boguila	Dec-02	6	14	5	9			14				1F civ with new baby; 2M brothers; 1F youth speak french; 1M her bro; collective int at weird vill across irstrip; 4F civ sans men speak french
Boguila	Dec-03	7	14	11	3	1	1	9			3	3M church; 2X3 DDR (revolving); 1M sage; 1M CdV; 1F civ; 2F civ
Boguila	Dec-04	7	9	5	4	1		7	1			1M trad healer; 1F Tard healer & Husband; 2F DDR com; 1M & 1F civ under tree; 1 Sage with 1 Myouth; 1M HR guy MSF
Bodjomo	Dec-05	7	11	7	4	3	4	3	2			1M INGO nat; Big Poeule Chief & ajoints; 1F wife of Chief; 2F Poeule civ; 2M FACA; 1F Woman's IGA CBO; 1M Gendarmerie
Boguila	Dec-06	6	7	7	0		4	1	2			1M Sous-prefet; 1 Cpolice Commis; 2 FACA; 1M ACF; 1M MSF; 1 M local advisor
Boguila	Dec-07	7	12	1	11			11				2F Mama Sussane; 1F Mama Yougouda; 1F Womens Association; 1 poor woman; 3 hardluck ladies; 2 abandoned hardluck ladies; 1F Collete
Boguila	Dec-09	3	6	1	5			6				3 Women Sunday Boguila; 1M traditional doctor; 1 F fish lady
Boguila	Dec-10	3	3	3					1		1	1M Pastor; 1M Gendarmerie; 1M National staff on HR
Boguila	Dec-11	6	7	0	7			6			1	1F widow pregnant; 1F scorcelerie story; 1F from Markunda HR; 1F heart sick baby; 1F young visitor; 1F Pastor/translator
Totals		69	114	63	51	8	10	77	8	1	9	
		Percentage		55%	45%	7%	9%	68%	7%	1%	8%	

Interviews in Zemio in Central African Republic 17 December 2012 - 14 January 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pyle	Male	Female	Elders	Gov Officials	Civilians	NNGO & Nat Staff	INGO / UN	Religious Leaders	Comments
Zemio	17.12.12	8	14	6	8		14					1F with 2 husbands; 3F 2 unmarried; 1 man about sorcery; 1F IDP; 1Mcultivator w French; 2F unmarried; 1F sick w 2M; 1M fabriquer
Zemio	18.12.12	8	18	5	13		18					2F & 2M man sick; 3M artisans; 1F distiller; 1F operated; 2F Grand Matriarch; 5F sexual violence; 1F husband probs; 1 F gastric prob
Zemio	19.12.12	7	9		9		1	8				1F grandma with sons kids; 2 F youth; 1 F mother-in-law; 2 F mother & youth @ bar; 1 F false timid lady; 1 F CdV; 1 Kidnapped IDP
Zemio	20.12.12	8	10	7	3	2	1	5	2			1F nothing; 1 old man taylor; 1 M merchant; 1F 14yr viol; 1M CdG; 1F silly girl; 2M elderly boa; 2M CBO Judapac
Zemio	21.12.12	8	14	6	8		3	7	2		2	1M traditional Dr; 1M pastor; 1F trad Dr; 2F coming; 1Priest heading reconciliation committee; 3F generation; 2 F by Peuhle; 3 CdV
Zemio	22.12.12	2	5	4	1			1			4	1F Gertrude CBO orphans; 3M community church
SiteB IDPs	24.12.12	6	16	6	10	1	2	12			1	SiteB IDPs: 5 women; 1MCdV with bro; 1M civilian; 1 odl CdV & old mama; 1 M older pastor; 1M & 3 F hunter family
Peuhle Site D	26.12.12	3	10	6	4	5		5				5M Peuhle leaders; 4F peuhle ladies; 1 Peuhle translator
Peuhle Ville	27.12.12	3	5	4	1	2		3				1F Peuhle in ville; 1M Peuhle in ville; 3M Peuhle elders in village
Site A IDPS	28.12.12	7	17	11	6	4		12			1	Site A (Axe Obo):2M 2F IDPs; 3F IDPs Catherine; 2M 1F drunk Pastor/Eldor; 1M IDP; 1M CdV; 1 CdV Head for reconciliation; Chef de Groupe-Site B
Saturday	29.12.12											off
writing	30.12.12											writing
Zemio	31.12.12	3	3	2	1		2		1			Sous-Prefet; Jupadec Admin; Lady Mayor
off	01.01.13											off
DRC Refugees	02.01.13	5	12	10	2	6	2	3	1			5M Camp President& advisors; 1M Gov appoint CdSecurity; 5M CdG & civ; 1F civ; 1M Jupadec
DRC Refugeess	03.01.13	7	24		24			24				5Women Ref @ camp;2F refugees; 1F under tarp; 4F with knife kid; 5 youth girls @ camp; 6 diverse ladies @ camp; 1F Jupadec animateur
DRC Refugees	04.01.13	7	16	7	9			16				1F Refugee Kidnapped; 1M & 3F old refugees; 3M youth; 1 F Zande near camp; 1M & 1 F Zande near camp; 1M educated near camp
Saturday	05.01.13	2	22	22		1		20		1		1M Chef de Peuhle with 20 men; 1 M UNHCR community services
Authorities +	07.01.13	5	8	6	2		3	5				Coopi nat staff 2M&2F; 1M FACA; 1M Youth President; 1M CdG
writing	08.01.13	2	3	1	2				1	2		2F Maternity staff @ hospital; 1M Jupadec Animateur
SiteC IDPs	09.01.13	7	12	5	7			11	1			3F IDPs, SiteC; 1M2F IDPs SiteC; 2 Youth SiteC; 1M IDP Site C; 1F Site C IDP; 1F elder with grandkids; 1M HR Activist
Site C & B	10.01.13	6	15	4	11			14	1			3F IDPs, SiteC; 1M IDP Zemio local SiteC; 2F IDP SiteC; 1M IDP Traditional Dr Sudan Site C; 6F Site B IDP Gwienga; 2M CdV Gwienga, Site B
Congolais & +	11.01.13	6	10	5	5	1	1	8				1M Obo Pres Ref Cong; 1M 1F youth viaS Sudan Bukaw; 2F Ref ancienne; 2M 1elderly Sukodi; 2F 1 elderly F stayee Sukodi; 1M Senaire CdSec
Zemio	12.01.13	2	2	2					2			
Zemio	14.01.13	2	2	1	1				2			
Totals		114	247	120	127	22	15	185	14	3	8	
	Percentage			49%	51%	9%	6%	75%	6%	1%	3%	

Interviews in Mboki in Central African Republic 18-22 January, 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Mboki	18.01.13	4	5	3	2		4		1			1M FACA; 1F Mayor; 2M UPDF; 1F Coopi Protection
	19.01.13	8	11	5	6	1	1	8			1	1M Gendarmerie; 1M Zande; 1M Pastor; 1F local; 1M mouthy Guy; 2F cultivators; 1M IDP President; 1 F IDP (ax Zemio)
	21.01.13	9	20	6	14			19	1			3F res; 2F elderly res; 3M Acted guard; 2F 1 was IDP; 1M Coopi animateur; 1M 2F Zemio/congolais ref couple; 1F sister congolais; 1 M oppressed small congo ref; 2F res on deplace site
	22.01.13	4	7	2	5			6	1			1F refusal IDP ax Zemio; 2M Youth Pres IDP ax Zemio; 3F IDPs; 1F INGO Nat staff
	Totals	25	43	16	27	1	5	33	3	0	1	
Percentage		37%	63%	2%	12%	77%	7%	0%	2%			

Interviews in Kabo in Central African Republic 05 - 15 February, 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Gov Authorities	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	INGO / UN	Religious Leaders	Comments
Kabo	04.02.13	3	4	4	0		2		1	1		1M DRC Expat prot; 2M Seleka Kabo; 1 Preist Kabo
	05.02.13	5	10	2	8			7	3			1M MSF Kabo; 1F Solidarity Kabo; 1M DRC Prot; 3F DRC nat staff; 4F DRC Nat staff
	06.02.13	7	14	12	2	7	1		5	1		DRC Expat; IDP Pres Site B; Mayor; IDP Pres & CdV; ICRC; Preist
	07.02.13	6	10	10	0	3		3	1	2	1	1M ICRC, 1M DRC expat; 1M DRC Edward; 2M CdQ & sage Christian; 5M CdQ Runga, Muslim; Imam
	08.02.13	5	14	4	10	2		6	4	2		6F at Women's centre; 4F DRC staff; 2 Sage, Site A; 1M DRC Kabo; 1M DRC HoM Bangui
	09.02.13	8	9	7	2	2		5			2	1M muslim civ; 1M Muslim CdQ; 1FMus civ; 1M Mus Youth Pres; 1 Mus Mbarara; 1M Site A cdQ; 2M Church
	11.02.13	2	3	3	0		3					2M Seleka; 1M Mayor
	12.02.13	6	18	6	12			16		2		3F chrstians kabo3; 6F Christians, Kabo; 1F & 2M Christians Kabo5; MSF expat meeting
	13.02.13	3	11	8	3	6		5				Mayor&Chefs Christian; 1M&2F Muslims Runga; 1F & 1M Christians Kabo 6;
	14.02.13	6	17	8	9	4		13				Mayor & 3 Muslim Chefs; 5F Christians Kabo1; 2F Muslims Arab; 2F Muslims, Arab; 1 M Muslim Arab; 2M Cristians, Kabo 2
	15.02.13	3	8	4	4	1	1		6			2M Elevere Chef & Tchad gov rep; 3F DRC CPF; 1F&2M DRC Clinique Juridic
Totals		54	118	68	50	25	7	48	18	15	5	
Percentage		58%	42%	21%	6%	41%	15%	13%	4%			

Interviews in Batangafo in Central African Republic 01 - 28 February, 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	UN & INGO	Religious Leaders	Comments
Batangafo	01.02.13	2	3	2	1		2			1		Briefing DRC Batangafo; FACA Batangafo
	02.02.13	1	2	1	1					2		DRC Prot Batangafo & Kabo
	04.02.13	1	3	1	2					3		2F DRC Jurists on legal aid batangafo & Kabo
	18.02.13	3	26	13	13	2		22	2			2CdV+10M IDPs Ax Wandago Bat; 12F IDPs diri ax Wandago Bat: DRC Prot dialogue
	19.02.13	3	4	2	2		1			3		DRC Prot Batangafo & Kabo; FACA Bat; DRC Prot
	20.02.13	4	10	2	8				4	6		DRC internal prot dialogue; clinic Juridic 1M&1F parajurists Bat; 2F Jurists DRC Prot Bat
	21.02.13	6	28	9	19	4		24				CdG #5 Christian; 1FIDP from Kabo; 3 men local relatives of Kabo IDPs; 2F business ladies; CdG #4 & 5 other men
	22.02.13	7	28	17	11	2		25	1			1M DRC parajurist; 1M CdQ Muslim & 4 young men; 7M youth group; 2F Kabo IDPs; 4 Kabo IDPs at rented house with group; 2F & 1 M Christians left early; 6 young women with babies
	23.02.13	4	4	3	1			4				1F alcohol seller; 1F older, wife of MSF chruch guy; 1F making penutbutter things; 1M on ax Buka
	25.02.13	8	11	5	6	5	1	5				1M Islamic Delegate; 1M Chef des Eleveres; 1CdG&2CdQ; 1 F Buying sesemae; 1F Preparing alcohol; 1F CdQ; 2F poor; 1 F Muslim elder
	26.02.13	5	9	7	2	4		5				CdG by MSF; 2F Mechants; 2M CdV Gofu; 1 M IDP Kabo; 3M Elders of Gofu
	27.02.13	5	16	11	5	4		12				CdQ Bafo1 IDPs; 1 CdV + 5M Bamasara IDPs ax Kabo; CdV + 4M IDPs Diri 2; 5F IDPs Diri 2
	28.02.13	2	4	3	1			3		1		1F Muslim INGO natstaff; 3M IDPs Bobazi village Ax Ouandago
Totals		51	148	76	72	21	4	100	7	16	0	
Percentage		51%	49%	14%	3%	68%	5%	11%	0%			

Interviews in Ndele in Central African Republic 08 - 19 March, 2013

Location	Date	TTL Interviews	Total Pple	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	NGO & Nat Staff	INGO / UN	Religious Leaders	Comments
Ndele	08.03.13	2	12	9	3			10	2			DRC CdBase; DRC Nat Team Ndele 8M & 2F
	09.03.13	5	8	2	6		6	1		1		2F Church; 1 Pres Womans Associatin; 3F @ base; 1M DRC Staff; 1M Pres of Islamic Committee
	11.03.13	6	10	8	2	3	1	5		1		DRC prot team; 2CdG Sultan; 1M CdQ Saraonion; 1Pastor; 1Sultan SG de Mayor; 1F NGO nat staff
	12.03.13	7	22	15	7	1		12	8	1		DRC prot team; 2F Muslims in compound; 7M Muslims outside; groupd meeting with 30 youth; DRC prot tam analysis of that meeting; 1 drunk CdQ Artisanal; 2F Artisanal
	13.03.13	7	23	10	13	3		18	2			1F Awa @ base; 1M Christ Safari; 3 CdQ on pation; 1 DRC Veronique; 5 M Youth & 2 F; 9F angry against Muslims distrib
	14.03.13	7	18	8	10		1	17				1M Fomac; 3 Woman IDPs FOMAC young; 3 Women elder IDPs @ FOMAC; 3 M angry IDPS @ FOMAC; 3M IDPs @ FOMAC senior ed guy; 1M Chaufer Safari; 4F Muslim Housa
	15.03.13	7	27	4	23	1		23	1	1	1	1M Pastor on hill; 1F womens leader; 1 CdQGuluMange; 1M ICRC; 4F with kids; 18 church ladies; 1 M DRC
	16.03.13	5	18		18			17	1			2FMuslim @ house; 10F Christian laughing @ Sel; 2F Christ going back to field; 3F in French Focal point
	18.03.13	5	12	6	6		2	5	4	1		DRCprot team; 1F ICRC prot; 2M from the mayors office; 1M Muslim with eleveres; 4F christian 2 young
	19.03.13	3	7	5	2			3	4			DRC prot team Ndele; children @ centre; 1 Muslim lady @ centre
Totals		54	157	67	90	8	4	101	36	5	3	
Percentages		100	43%	57%	5%	3%	64%	23%	3%	2%		

Interviews in Bangui in Central African Republic July 19, 2013 - September 05, 2013

Location	Date	Interviews										Comments
		TTL	Total Ppl	Male	Female	Elders	Officials	Civilians	INGO / Nat Staff	INGO / UN	Religious	
Bangui	20.07.2013	5	9	3	6	0	0	3	3	3	0	round table w Kate, Aka, Angel, Mathieu, Ahmed, Sabine (prep fiche)
	21	3	6	2	4					6		
	22	3	5	3	2				3	2		
Galabagia	23	8	12	6	6	1		4	6	1		
Office	24	4	12	6	6			8	3	1		Christian Focus group (12 ppl); 1F Sandrine
Office	25	3	17	8	9			13	3	1		Muslim team focus group; training
Ngbeguewe (PK12)	26	6	14	6	8	1		13				1F CdQ; 5M youth; 2F widows; 1M funny old guy; 2F with Fostin; 3F @ kiosk
Petené	27	4	58	25	33	1		44	4	9		2 focus-groups with ECHO; 1 meeting with 2F&1M ECHO; 1 NGO staff
Bimbo	28	4	4	0	4	1		1		2		1F CdQ; 1F attacked; 1F IRC; 1F mercy Corps
Fatima I	29	2	4	0	4	2		2				2M CdQ; 2F father was lawyer
Castor / Saidou	30	8	18	8	10	6		12				1F&1M CdeQ; 2F&1M Marie; 2M students; 2F&1M open compound; 1M Social Affairs; 3M CdQ; 2F Steph; 3F without men
Camerounais Nord	31	7	11	4	7	2		5	1	3		2M cdq; 2F Muslim inside; 1F Hausa; 1F Christian tea-shop; 1F Young Muslim speaking French; 1M ICRC not; 2F&1M ECHO
Gbafo / Combattant	Aug-01	7	17	6	11	2		13		2		1M CdQ; 2F&1M pink shirt; 3M open space; 4F petty commerce; 1M CdQ; 2F 2 month baby; 1F Old lady cutting veg; 2F Solidarity
Kassai	2	7	11	5	6	1		10				1M CdQ; 1M&3F; 2M very nervous; 1F cutting okra; 2F boy kidnapped; 1M lady feeding baby; team focus group (fri afternoon)
Mandaba / Fouh	3	4	7	6	1	5		2				1M CdQ; 2M; 1M&1F CdQ Mandaba; 2M Fouh in tracksuit
Gobongo III	Sun 04	2	4	4	0	1		3				1M CdQ; 3M adgitated youth with CdQ
Ngaragba II/Kitigba	5	8	18	9	9	2		15		1		1M CdQ; 3F on road; 3M with lots of kids; 2F&1F FACA retreater; 1M cdQ; 1F Coopi NGO; 2F&1M targeted for guns; 2M&1F
Yembi II / Malimaka	6	9	16	4	12	2	4	10				1F CdQ Yembi II; 1F&1M civil authorities; 1F Mayor PK12; 1Madjoint PK12; 1M CdQ; 3F&1M; 3F speaking French; 3F
Cité-Jean23-II / Dedeuge	7	9	15	6	9	3		12				1M CdQ Boniface; 2F old lady on balcony; 1M paralysis; 3F from funeral; 1F&1M Teacher and calm wife; 1M CdQ Advisor Mr Baboue; 1M CdQ; 1F&1M; 2F many kids
Fouh4 / Mandaba	8	9	30	14	16	2		26	2			1M CdQ; 1F IDP from PK12; 1M&3F youth students; 1F&4M side of road; 4M boys students; 4F Post Seleka; 2M&4F side of road Mandaba; 3F post exposure screaming kids; 1M cDQ; 2M Acted NGO
Workshop	9	1	9	4	5			8		1		Focus group team
Bimbo	10	3	7	1	6			5			2	1M&3F irritating visotir; 2F Catholic sisters; 1F widow of FACA
Workshop	Aug 11-13											Workshop
Meetings	14	3	4	1	3	1				2	1	1M Archbishop; 2F NGO Merci Corps; 1F Muslim leader Adjia
Ouango	15	2	3	2	1	1				2		1M CdQ; 1F&1M ACF NGO
Bayadomba	16	7	14	2	12	1		13				1F CdQ; 1F on road; 3F Muslims; 2F fat baby; 1F&1M Muslim/Christ mix; 3F smoking fire; 1F&1M
	19	1	1	1	0						1	Imam
	22	2	2	0	2		1			1		1F Bangui Mayor; 1F UNICEF
Totals		131	328	136	192	35	5	222	25	37	4	
Percentage				41%	59%	11%	2%	68%	8%	11%	1%	

Central African Republic - East Cameroon (September 10, 2014 - September 25, 2014)												
Date	Location	TTL Interviews	Total Pple Interviewed	Male	Female	UN/NGO	NGO / Nat Staff	Officials	Community Leader	Civilians	Religious Leaders	Comments
Sept 5-9	Bangui	5	11	2	9	5		1	5			1M Muslin PK5; 1F UNICEF; 3FIntersos; 1M Mus MP; 1F Mariane; 1M MSF; 3F Muslims
Sept 10-12	Carnot	8	13	11	2	2	3	6		2		1M Misca; 1M Nat Priest; 2F MSF; 3M Gendarmerie; 2M Human Rights; 2M FACA; 1M
Sep-12	Berberati	1	3	3	0		3					3M IEDA
Sep-12	Kentzou	2	5	4	1	1	4					3M&1FUNHCR; 1M youth teleshop
Sep-13	Lolo	7	44	35	9	1	1		6	36		1M RedX; 6M Pheule; 1M translator; 1M UNHCR; 4F Foulbe; 25M focus group; 5F uo higher
Sep-14	Kentzou	10	50	41	9	1		1		48		1M commercant@Hotel; 2M&1F@teashop; 1M@teleshop; 1M governer; 25M at teashop; 3F hosts; 10Mon road; 2F fat baby; 3F anti-balaka lady
Sep-15	Lolo	8	34	22	12	1			15	18		15M chefs; 2M&3F positive hosts; 1M stutter; 1M&4F on porch; 1M old man; 1M&4F in garden; 1M in market; 1F Alberta
Sep-16	Mbili	7	27	21	6	1	2		14	10		1M NGO; 3M CdQ; 8M&3F @ official local; 1M&2F in town; 3M old refugee; 5M coucellors; 1F NGO
Sep-17	Kentzou	7	11	5	6		1	1	1	8		1M Sous Prefet; 1F Nurse; 2M&1F local prej; 2F local farmers; 1F new baby; 1M&1F washing clothes; 1M NGO
Sep-18	Mbili	6	19	15	4	1			11	7		6M camp leaders; 6M Muslim Chefs; 3F restau; 1M mixed fam; 3M Building site; 1F NGO Alberta
Sep-19	Mbili	7	14	6	8					14		5M merged in town; 4F Foullata; 1F Hausa; 1F sis of trans; 1F local coms; 1M Nigel; 1F from Bangui
Sep-20	Kentzou	5	6	4	2				4	2		1F Cleaner; 1M @ teleshop; 2M Tea-shop; 1M priest; 1M Imam
Sep-21	Kentzou	3	3	1	2	2	1					1M Leonadre; 1F assistant; 1F Alberta
Totals		76	240	170	70	15	15	8	48	150	4	
Percentage				71%	29%	6%	6%	3%	20%	63%	2%	

[illegible]

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